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REGIONAL COOPERATION

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report covers the period from the substantive session of 1992 of the Economic and Social Council to the substantive session of 1993. During the first half of 1993, three of the five regional commissions held their regular sessions. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) held its forty-eighth session in Geneva from 20 to 28 April; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held its forty-ninth session in Bangkok from 21 to 29 April; and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) held the twenty-eighth session of the Commission and the 19th meeting of the Conference of Ministers in Addis Ababa from 3 to 6 May, and the 14th meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole from 26 to 30 April.

Until 1983, the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation included a section on major economic and social developments within the regions. Since similar information has been made available to the Council in the summaries of the surveys of the five regions, it was decided to exclude that section from the report on regional cooperation (see "Summary of the economic survey of Europe, 1992-1993" (E/1993/54), "Summary of the economic and social survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1992" (E/1993/52), "Summary of the economic survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1992" (E/1993/46), "Summary of the survey of economic and social conditions in Africa, 1991-1992" (E/1993/53) and "Summary of the survey of economic and social developments in the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 1992" (E/1993/48).

* E/1993/100.

The present report contains five sections: section I.A deals with matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council and section I.B with matters brought to its attention; section II highlights the work of the regional commissions; section III reports on meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions held during the year; section IV contains information on the implementation of Council resolution 1992/43 on strengthening the role of the regional commissions; and section V reports on a subject relating to interregional cooperation, of common interest to all regions, in response to Council resolution 1982/174.

The annual reports of ECE, ESCAP, and ECA will provide further background information on the matters dealt with in the present report; the report of ECE on its forty-eighth session will be issued as Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 17 (E/1993/37); the report of ESCAP on its forty-ninth session as ibid., Supplement No. 16 (E/1993/36); and the report of ECA on the 19th meeting of the Conference of Ministers and the twenty-eighth session of the Commission as ibid., Supplement No. 18 (E/1993/38).

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I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Matters calling for action by the Council

1. Economic Commission for Europe

1. The Commission adopted the following decisions calling for action by the Council:

Decision A (48). Recommendation to the Economic and Social Council for non-participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in the work of the Economic Commission for Europe

The Economic Commission for Europe,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 47/1,

Recommends to the Economic and Social Council that it decide that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) shall not participate in the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe as long as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) shall not participate in the work of the United Nations General Assembly.

Decision N (48). Recommendation to the Economic and Social Council to amend the Economic Commission for Europe terms of reference

The Economic Commission for Europe,

Stressing the importance of the political and economic reforms taking place in countries originating from former member countries of the Economic Commission for Europe,

Seeking to ensure the participation of the Member States of the United Nations in the activities undertaken by the regional commissions of the United Nations,

1. Recommends to the Economic and Social Council that Articles 3, 7, 9 and 10 of the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Europe shall be amended and read as follows:

Article 3: cancelled;

Article 7: The members of the Commission are the European Members of the United Nations, the United States of America, Canada, Switzerland 1/ and

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1/ Pursuant to resolution 1600 (LI), Switzerland became a member of the Commission on 24 March 1972.

Israel. 2/ In so far as the former USSR was a European Member of the United Nations, new members of the United Nations that had been constituent republics located in the Asian part of the former USSR are entitled to be members of the United Nations/ECE;

Article 9: cancelled;

Article 10: cancelled;

2. Informs the Economic and Social Council that the United Nations/ECE will consult other commissions concerned, prior to establishing practical arrangements for extending its activities to new members, which are included in the geographical scope of other regional commissions to avoid duplication. If any matter cannot be settled by consultation, it will be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council for consideration;

3. Recommends the adoption by the Economic and Social Council at its regular session in 1993 of the draft decision set out below.

DRAFT DECISION

Amendments to the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Europe

The Economic and Social Council, taking note of the recommendation contained in decision N (48) adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe at its forty-eighth session, decides:

(a) To approve the amendment of Articles 3, 7, 9 and 10 of the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Europe, as contained in decision N (48) of the Economic Commission for Europe,

(b) To modify the Terms of Reference of the Economic Commission for Europe accordingly.

2. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

2. During the forty-ninth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Government of India offered to hold the fiftieth session of the Commission at New Delhi during the period February to April 1994 and agreed to bear all responsibility for the additional administrative, logistical and financial expenditure involved. The Executive Secretary, after consultation with the host Government and the Chairperson, would determine the exact dates of the session and inform members and associate members accordingly. The Commission decided to hold its fiftieth session in New Delhi in accordance with paragraph 4 (f) of General Assembly resolution 40/243, subject to the approval of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

2/ Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/72, Israel became a member of the Commission on 26 July 1991, on a temporary basis.

3. In adopting its resolution 49/2 on resource mobilization for the implementation of the regional action programme for phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, the Commission approved the following draft resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council:

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Resource mobilization for the implementation of the regional action programme for phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Council

Recommends that the General Assembly adopt the following resolution:

"The General Assembly,

"Noting resolution 49/1 of 29 April 1993 of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on resource mobilization for the implementation of the regional action programme for phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific,

"Recalling General Assembly resolution 39/227 of 18 December 1984, by which the Assembly proclaimed a Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific during the period 1985-1994, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/78 of 27 July 1984 on the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994,

"Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/75 of 26 July 1991, in which the Council urged all appropriate organizations, particularly the United Nations Development Programme, to contribute effectively to the formulation and implementation of a regional action programme for the second half of the Decade, and General Assembly decision 46/453 of 20 December 1991, in which the Assembly endorsed Council resolution 1991/75,

"Reaffirming the importance of phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific,

"Concerned that it may not be possible to implement the regional action programme effectively and efficiently without adequate funds, particularly from the United Nations Development Programme, and noting the decision of the United Nations Development Programme Governing Council in this regard,

"1. Requests the United Nations Development Programme, in the light of General Assembly decision 46/453, to reconsider its decision regarding the level of funding to be provided for the implementation of the regional action programme so as to create greater impact from phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific;

"2. Requests bilateral donors to take note of General Assembly decision 46/453, so as to ensure that the programme approved by the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications will be implemented effectively;

"3. Invites all Governments in a position to do so to contribute to the implementation of the programme approved by the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications;

"4. Requests the Secretary-General to report on the action taken to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session."

4. In its resolution 49/4 on population and sustainable development: goals and strategies into the twenty-first century, the Commission requested that the Economic and Social Council bring the resolution to the attention of the General Assembly. The resolution read as follows:

"49/4. Population and sustainable development: goals and strategies into the twenty-first century

"The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

"Recalling its resolution 48/4 of 23 April 1992 on the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, 1992, in which it referred to its decision to convene the Conference as a ministerial meeting jointly with the United Nations Population Fund in order to review the changes in the population situation that had occurred during the 1980s and highlight the perspectives of population policies and programmes for the 1990s in the ESCAP region,

"Recognizing that integration of population factors in the socio-economic development process is crucial and that the alleviation of poverty is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development,

"Mindful of the substantial progress achieved by members and associate members in responding to the Asia-Pacific Call for Action on Population and Development adopted by the Third Asian and Pacific Population Conference, held at Colombo in 1982, and the role played by the secretariat and donors, particularly the United Nations Population Fund, in its implementation,

"Taking note of the importance of the International Conference on Population and Development to be held at Cairo in 1994,

"1. Welcomes the adoption by the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, held in Bali, Indonesia from 19 to 27 August 1992, of the Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development, and endorses the recommendations of that Declaration;

"2. Urges all members and associate members to take early and effective action to implement the Bali Declaration through the provision of adequate financial and human resources;

"3. Also urges all members, associate members and the Executive Secretary to make every effort to incorporate population, environment and development concerns in their inputs to the International Conference on Population and Development;

"4. Calls upon donor countries and funding agencies, in particular the United Nations Population Fund, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, to provide substantive and financial support for the implementation of the Bali Declaration;

"5. Requests the Executive Secretary, as head of the main centre within the United Nations system for the general economic and social development of the Asia and Pacific region, to:

"(a) Assist members and associate members in the implementation of the Bali Declaration by initiating appropriate activities, and to review and appraise their progress;

"(b) Cooperate with members and associate members on implementation of the Bali Declaration, and, in the light of the declining financial and human resources devoted to the Asia and Pacific regional population programme, to seek to mobilize resources for this purpose;

"(c) Continue to play an advocacy role in the planning and implementation of population programmes in the ESCAP region, and even more vigorously in the light of the Bali Declaration;

"(d) Disseminate information through regular publications and other appropriate means concerning the implementation of the Bali Declaration and the challenges faced by countries in the region in its implementation;

"(e) Report to the Commission at periodic intervals on the progress made;

"(f) Organize a meeting of senior planners and policy makers to incorporate concretely the recommendations of the Bali Declaration within the regional document for the global Conference at Cairo;

"6. Invites the Executive Secretary, in transmitting the present resolution to the Economic and Social Council, to request that it be brought to the attention of the General Assembly."

3. Economic Commission for Africa

5. At the twenty-eighth session of the Commission and 19th meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic development and planning held in Addis Ababa from 3 to 6 May 1993, the Conference of Ministers recommended the following draft resolutions for adoption by the Council:

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

Preparations for the World Summit for Social Development 3/

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 47/92 of 16 December 1992 on the convening of a World Summit for Social Development in 1995,

Convinced that the World Summit for Social Development would provide a unique opportunity to focus the attention of all countries on the main social and human concerns and to promote policies and strengthen international cooperation in order to effectively address these concerns,

Convinced further that Africa has a special stake in the Summit and its outcome,

Cognizant of the continuing severe deterioration of social and human conditions in Africa and the need to reverse this unacceptable situation as a matter of urgency,

Determined to ensure the effective participation of Africa in the preparatory process for the Summit and at the Summit itself,

1. Urges States members of the Economic Commission for Africa to actively participate in the preparatory activities of the Summit, particularly the meetings of the Preparatory Committee set up by the General Assembly;

2. Underscores the need for members of the Commission to adopt an African common position on the issues to be discussed by the Summit;

3. Decides that an African common position on the issues before the World Summit for Social Development should be formulated by the January 1994 meeting of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development, which should serve as the regional preparatory meeting for the Summit;

4. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to prepare, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and other African regional and subregional organizations, the necessary documentation for the meeting, including a draft African common position on the issues before the Summit;

3/ Resolution 749 (XXVIII) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

5. Requests further the Executive Secretary of the Commission to transmit the African common position to the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Summit, which is scheduled to be held in New York from 31 January to 11 February 1994.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

The Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa 4/

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 44/237 of 22 December 1989 proclaiming the period 1991-2000 the second Industrial Development Decade for Africa,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 47/177 of 22 December 1992 that adopted the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade and decided to adjust the period for the Decade to cover the years 1993-2002,

Bearing in mind the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of Ministers resolution 739 (XXVII) and its decision Dec. 1 (XXVII) of April 1992 on industrial development in Africa,

Aware of the need to harmonize the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa and the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa,

Considering the relevant provisions of Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992,

1. Mandates the eleventh meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry, to be held in Mauritius from 31 May to 4 June 1993, to examine the plan of action to harmonize the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa and the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa and make any recommendations thereon;

2. Reiterates its appeal to the United Nations Development Programme to allocate under the regional component of its fifth programming cycle for Africa (1992-1996) adequate resources for supporting the activities of the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade;

3. Appeals to financial institutions, particularly the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other financial institutions, to provide full support to the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa and contribute effectively to the financing of identified projects in the implementation of the programme at the national, subregional and regional levels;

4/ Resolution 752 (XXVIII) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

4. Specifically urges African countries to give priority to the mobilization of their own financial resources through increased domestic savings and better management of national resources for the financing and implementation of the programme of the Decade;

5. Invites African countries and African development institutions to take the necessary measures to create an enabling environment conducive to domestic, foreign, private and public industrial investment;

6. Urges African countries to promote the private sector and involve them fully in decision-making and implementation of the programme of the Second Industrial Development Decade;

7. Invites African countries to provide adequate support to African entrepreneurs in order to promote the development of small- and medium-scale industries;

8. Requests the General Assembly to provide increased resources to the Economic Commission for Africa for the Decade, especially to strengthen industrial cooperation in the implementation of the Decade;

9. Further requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to further harmonize their activities to support member States in their efforts and ensure the effective implementation of the Decade.

DRAFT RESOLUTION III

Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa 5/

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling Economic Commission for Africa Conference of Ministers resolution 710 (XXVI) of 12 May 1991 in which the programme of the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade was adopted,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/83 of 26 July 1991 by which the implementation of the Second Transport and Communications Decade programme was launched,

Referring to General Assembly decision 46/456 of 20 December 1991 approving the launching of the Decade programme and providing resources for its implementation,

Further referring to resolutions ECA/UNTACDA/Res.91/84 and ECA/UNTACDA/Res.93/89 of 8 February 1991 and 12 March 1993 respectively of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning

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5/ Resolution 761 (XXVIII) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

approving and launching the implementation of the programme of the Second Decade,

Having considered the report of the ninth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, held in Addis Ababa on 12 and 13 March 1993,

Bearing in mind that the first mid-term evaluation and review of the programme of the Decade is scheduled to take place in 1994,

Noting that new projects would be prepared for inclusion in the programme in 1995,

Recognizing the importance of resource mobilization and other promotional activities for the successful implementation of the Decade programme and projects at national, subregional and regional levels,

Noting with appreciation the immense support which the United Nations Development Programme has provided for the preparation and launching of the Second Decade programme,

1. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to favourably consider and continue to finance activities in support of the implementation of the Decade programme during the fifth programming cycle of the United Nations Development Programme;

2. Appeals to individual African and international financial institutions to increase their support for and facilitate the financing of projects and activities of the Second Decade programme;

3. Further appeals to African member States to ensure and actively pursue the implementation of the Second Decade projects;

4. Calls upon the member institutions of the Resource Mobilization Committee, especially the African Development Bank as Chairman of the Committee, to carry out resource mobilization and promotional activities to enhance the successful implementation of the programme;

5. Requests the Economic Commission for Africa in its capacity as lead agency, together with all the relevant mechanisms of the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade, to:

(a) Carry out the first mid-term evaluation of the programme of the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa in 1994, as stipulated in the implementation strategy;

(b) Revise the objectives and strategy of the Decade programme in the light of changed circumstances, if need be, in consultation with member States;

(c) Assist member States and African intergovernmental organizations to prepare and screen new projects for inclusion in the programme in 1995 as

stipulated in the programme implementation plan, in consultation with member States; 6/

(d) Organize two regional workshops on the Second Decade to disseminate the strategy and promote the objectives of the Second Decade in Africa;

6. Requests the General Assembly to provide the Economic Commission for Africa with the necessary regular budget resources to enable it to effectively and efficiently carry out the activities listed in paragraphs 5 (a) to (d) above in its capacity as lead agency of the Second Decade;

7. Further requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to report to its next meeting on the progress made in implementation of this resolution.

DRAFT RESOLUTION IV

Strengthening development information systems for regional cooperation and integration in Africa 7/

The Economic and Social Council,

Concerned by the ever widening North-South gap in the flow of vital information as well as in acquisition and utilization of information technology,

Conscious of the importance of information in fostering African regional cooperation and integration, in particular through strengthening of existing regional groupings and the establishment of the African Economic Community,

Bearing in mind the need to establish data networks and databases as specified in the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, as well as the emphasis on information technology delineated in the Lomé IV Convention,

Recalling also Economic Commission for Africa Conference of Ministers resolutions 716 (XXVI) of 12 May 1991, 726 (XXVII) of 22 April 1992 and 732 (XXVII) of 22 April 1992,

Appreciative of the continuing support given by the International Development Research Centre to the Pan-African Development Information System's activities to strengthen the information capabilities of member States,

Appreciative also of the support given by eleven member States for the submission of the project "Information Technology for Africa" for further consideration by the European Commission in the framework of the Lomé IV Convention,

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6/ DOC/UNTACDA/MIN/04/Rev.3 of March 1991.

7/ Resolution 766 (XXVIII) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

Noting with satisfaction the performance of the Economic Commission for Africa's Development Information System in the delivery of technical assistance to member States,

Noting with further satisfaction the proposals of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to incorporate the activities of the System into the programme budget of the Commission,

Bearing in mind the need to strengthen the Commission's subregional development information centres as information support for subregional economic cooperation and integration,

Noting with concern the decreasing availability of extrabudgetary resources for implementation and utilization of development information systems and technology,

Further noting with concern the precarious financial situation of the Pan-African Development Information System and the need to end its reliance on extrabudgetary sources of funding,

Welcoming the intention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide adequate resources for mandated programmes in Africa, with special attention to those in science and technology for development, in the preparation of his programme budget proposals for the biennium 1994-1995,

1. Requests the Pan-African Development Information System to build elements of cost recovery into its delivery of information services and products;

2. Urges member States, in order to receive further needed technical assistance in information systems development:

(a) To give priority to information systems development in the use of their United Nations Development Programme Country Indicative Planning Figures;

(b) To consider development information activities in their 1993 pledges to the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development;

(c) To use, where appropriate, the financial provision under the Lomé IV Convention for this purpose;

3. Urgently appeals to the donor community to support the Commission's activities to strengthen development information capabilities in the African region;

4. Requests the Commission to continue its leadership role in the coordination of development information and technology to respond to Africa's pressing development problems;

5. Also requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to seek additional resources for the Commission's subregional development information centres in the framework of the subprogramme on statistical and information systems development;

6. Requests the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, to ensure the provision of four professional and two local-level posts as well as resources to permit the delivery of activities to the Commission's subprogramme on information systems development beginning with its 1994-1995 programme budget.

DRAFT RESOLUTION V

African Institute for Economic Development and Planning 8/

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling Economic Commission for Africa Conference of Ministers resolutions 285 (XII) of 28 February 1975, 433 (XVII) of 30 April 1982, 577 (XX) of April 1985, 574 (XXI) of 19 April 1986, 612 (XXII) of 24 April 1987 and 622 (XXIII) of 15 April 1988 on the financing and future development of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning,

Recalling also Economic Commission for Africa Conference of Ministers resolution 669 (XXIV) of 7 April 1989 and 680 (XXV) of 19 May 1990 which appealed to the General Assembly, as a matter of urgency, to approve the incorporation of four core posts of the Institute in the regular budget,

Bearing in mind Economic Commission for Africa Conference of Ministers resolution 726 (XXVII) of April 1992 on strengthening the Economic Commission for Africa to face Africa's development challenges in the 1990s, which expressed gratitude to the General Assembly for providing the Institute with a grant to cover the costs of four professional posts for the 1992-1993 biennium, thus enabling it to contribute to the process of strengthening the operational capacity of the Commission in meeting the challenges facing Africa in the 1990s,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolutions 1985/62 and 1990/72 of 27 July 1990 which, among other things, recommended the incorporation of four core professional posts into the United Nations regular budget as a contribution to the long-term financing of the Institute and to enable it to carry out its approved work programmes and functions on a continued and sustained basis,

Noting that the Joint Inspection Unit, after a thorough examination of the Institute's situation, in its 1990 report (JI4/REP/90/4) had recommended that eight permanent posts should be created in the regular budget to erase annual uncertainty about the Institute's budget and offset dependency on United Nations Development Programme funding,

Bearing in mind that United Nations Development Programme policy requires that funding of core posts in institutions such as the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning should be discouraged and that the Programme is currently supporting a preparatory phase project designed to improve operational capacities for research, short-term training and networking, advisory/consultancy services and management audit,

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8/ Resolution 768 (XXVIII) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

Commending the increasing efforts of member States to regularly meet their obligations to the Institute by paying their annual assessed contributions,

Noting with appreciation that the resources put at the disposal of the Institute, in the form of the grant for the four professional posts for the years 1991 to 1993, have been productively used and that recent achievements in revitalizing the Institute and in improving its delivery capacities would not have been realized without these resources,

Noting with interest the increasingly successful attempts to generate independent incomes by various means and to develop operational projects for possible funding from diversified bilateral and other donor agencies,

Convinced that with the expansion in the fields of its activities to include subject areas related to development management in general, the Institute will in future years play an even more important role in the promotion of the sustained development of Africa,

Considering that the Institute is the only bilingual regional institution of its kind in Africa and that it has an outstanding record of providing training and research services to African countries in the area of economic development and planning,

Considering also that there are increasing demands being made by member States and their intergovernmental organizations for the services of the Institute, particularly for tailor-made training programmes,

Considering further that counterpart United Nations institutions in other regions have benefited from regular budget posts,

Conscious of the urgency of stabilizing the financing of the core posts in the Institute,

1. Urgently appeals to the General Assembly to convert the grant to the Institute into established professional posts in the regular budget as provided in the proposed programme budget for the 1994-1995 biennium of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;

2. Appeals further to the General Assembly to provide other types of resources for programme implementation, as requested in the Institute's component of the proposed programme budget for the 1994-1995 biennium of the Commission;

3. Calls upon member States to support, at the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and in other relevant fora, the requests for a minimum of four established professional posts for the Institute as part of the Commission's programme budget for the 1994-1995 biennium;

4. Requests member States to sustain their support to the Institute through payment of their contributions and through increased use of the various types of services it provides;

5. Urges the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and the management of the Institute to continue their efforts to mobilize resources from extrabudgetary and other supplementary resources to enable the Institute to implement its expanded programmes.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

1. Economic Commission for Europe

Decision B (48). The Commission's activities designed to assist countries of the region in transition to a market economy and their integration with the European and global economy

6. The Commission recalled General Assembly resolutions 47/187 and 47/171 and reaffirmed the value of the ECE programme of activities to assist countries in transition. It was mindful of the difficulties faced by those countries in financing the organization of and their participation in such activities. In view of the limited resources available in the regular budget it invited countries, organizations and private donors to contribute to the United Nations/ECE Trust Fund to support activities on transition issues. It stressed the importance, taking into account prevailing political and economic conditions, of efforts to improve access for products from countries in transition to international markets in order to strengthen their economic potential and reinforce structural reform. The Executive Secretary was asked to inform the Secretary-General of related ECE work for his reports to the Assembly on the role of the United Nations system in addressing problems faced by the economies in transition, including difficulties with their integration into the world economy, and possible action in support of privatization. The Executive Secretary was requested to present proposals for the diversification of ECE activities to assist transition countries, taking into account Assembly discussions on the above-mentioned reports.

Decision C (48). Economic cooperation in the Mediterranean in the light of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

7. Recognizing that the strengthening of economic cooperation among ECE member States contributed to promoting stability in the Mediterranean region and conscious of the need to develop such cooperation in the light of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and the Helsinki Document 1992: "The Challenges of Change", the Commission welcomed the CSCE Summit Declaration, which recognized that changes in Europe were relevant to the Mediterranean region and that economic, social, political and security developments in that region could have a bearing on Europe. The Commission stressed the need to devote special efforts to the protection of Mediterranean ecosystems. It called on the Executive Secretary to continue to undertake action-oriented studies on economic cooperation in the Mediterranean. It expressed satisfaction at the activities of the three transport centres in the Mediterranean region and recalled the joint ECA/ECE work on evaluation of studies on a permanent link across the

Straits of Gibraltar. The Commission welcomed the results of the Seminar for the Statistical Offices of the Mediterranean Countries (on environment, tourism and immigration statistics) and noted the results of the Meeting of Experts on Human Settlements Problems in Southern Europe on "Urban design and architecture with respect to Mediterranean climate and sustainable development", underlining the need for appropriate follow-up activities in these areas. The Executive Secretary was requested to continue to facilitate consultations regarding the Mediterranean Technical Assistance Programme and the Mediterranean Special Programme of Action with a view to strengthening further environmental management and development in the Mediterranean region.

Decision D (48). The work of the Commission and its future activities

8. Conscious of the important role of the ECE as an instrument for the implementation of the principles and aims of the United Nations Charter at the regional level, the Commission recalled its mandate to initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic reconstruction of Europe and appealed to other relevant international economic bodies to examine their possible contribution to that effect. The Commission requested its subsidiary bodies to take into account the provisions of the CSCE documents which call for multilateral implementation within the framework of the ECE and invited them to contribute to the follow-up of the CSCE Economic Forum on matters where the ECE has competence and can provide expertise and experience. The Commission approved its programme of work for 1993-1994 and endorsed in principle, subject to review at its forty-ninth session, its programme of work for 1993-1997. In the light of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 47/166 on international cooperation and assistance to alleviate the consequences of war in Croatia and to facilitate its recovery, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to inform the Secretary-General of relevant ECE work for inclusion in his reports to the Assembly, and invited its subsidiary bodies to consider possible work which could contribute to the implementation of Assembly resolutions and to study possible action to contribute to global programmes of the United Nations including forthcoming or recent global Conferences or international years.

Decision E (48). The provision of adequate resources for the servicing of the priority and other sectors of the Economic Commission for Europe

9. Conscious that the effective and efficient management of ECE depends on the reliable provision of resources, both financial and human, including skilled professionals, and aware that its increased membership had expanded ECE activities and imposed extra demands on its tightly-stretched resources, the Commission expressed concern that unfilled vacancies at the professional level were seriously impeding both technical and practical work of importance to member States, as well as the ability of the secretariat to respond to the growing needs of countries in transition. The Commission expressed concern also at the procedural difficulties encountered in recruiting qualified personnel, and reaffirmed the importance attached by member States to urgent action to provide resources necessary to maintain ECE efficiency and effectiveness. The

Commission requested its Executive Secretary to bring this decision to the attention of the Secretary-General.

Decision F (48). Cooperation in the field of environment and sustainable development

10. Conscious of the importance of sustainable development for the global community as a whole and Commission members in particular, and noting the decisions of UNCED and the provisions of Agenda 21 relating to the regional commissions, the Commission reaffirmed that cooperation in the field of environment and sustainable development was one of its priorities. It called on its subsidiary bodies to promote sustainable development as one of the guiding principles for all their relevant activities and to take into account the conclusions and recommendations of UNCED in their programmes of work, and elaborate action proposals as appropriate. As invited in Agenda 21, it requested the Executive Secretary to study the feasibility of organizing a regional conference on transport and the environment. It called on member States and the European Community to accede to ECE conventions in the environmental field and encouraged the senior advisers on environmental and water problems to review implementation and verification measures for these conventions and their protocols. The Commission noted the progress accomplished in the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project, in particular the establishment of Energy Efficiency Demonstration Zones, and encouraged the further enhancement of trade and cooperation in energy-efficient, environmentally sound technology and management practices, especially between countries in transition.

Decision G (48). Cooperation in the field of transport

11. Conscious of the problems of countries in transition in developing market economy mechanisms in the field of transport and stressing the importance of an efficient network of transport infrastructures for the development of the economies of those countries, the Commission underlined its conviction that EC had a prominent role in regional transport cooperation and encouraged the secretariat to elaborate elements for a European Transport Charter. The Commission endorsed the decision to stage a European road safety week in 1995. It supported the work undertaken to update or extend existing ECE transport conventions, welcoming the increasing number of contracting parties to ECE agreements and conventions, and invited Governments which had not yet acceded to them to examine possibilities for doing so. It underlined the importance of implementing a coherent system of transport infrastructure networks in Europe. The Commission noted the results of the Seminar on the Impact of Increasing Dimensions of Loading Units on Combined Transport and underlined the necessity for further harmonization of international regulations for the transport of dangerous goods.

Decision H (48). Cooperation and sustainable development in the chemical industry

12. Referring to the chapters of UNCED Agenda 21 concerning the promotion of cleaner production and responsible entrepreneurship in order to achieve sustainable industrial development, the Commission noted with interest the conclusions adopted by the High-level Meeting on Cooperation and Sustainable Development in the Chemical Industry and welcomed the joint efforts of Governments, private industry and international organizations to promote sustainability in the development of the chemical industry. The Commission stressed the importance of the follow-up activities to the high-level meeting entitled "Chemical Industry - Sustainable Economic and Ecological Development CHEMISEED" and invited the Working Party on the Chemical Industry to cooperate with its other principal subsidiary bodies in order to contribute to achieving sustainable development in the ECE region.

Decision I (48). Reporting from the subsidiary bodies to the Commission

13. Stressing the need to ensure an adequate information flow between the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and underlining the need to enhance the comparability of information in order to properly address cross-sectoral issues, the Commission decided on the scheduling of the meetings of its subsidiary bodies and the format and content of their reports.

Decision J (48). Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant

14. Recalling General Assembly resolution 47/165 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/38 the Commission expressed profound concern about the persisting effects of the Chernobyl catastrophe on the lives and health of people, in the affected areas, especially children. Aware of the need to enhance international cooperation to mitigate and minimize the radiological, health, socio-economic, psychological and environmental consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe, as well as its long-term effects, the Commission recognized the importance of continuing assistance to the countries affected by the accident. It called on its subsidiary bodies to consider their possible participation in this work, taking into account the activities of other international organizations. It requested the Executive Secretary to study the possibility of providing expertise on projects aimed at minimizing the consequences of the accident, and to contribute to the Secretary-General's analytical review of United Nations activities on this subject in accordance with Assembly resolution 47/165.

Decision K (48). The ECE's contribution to the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995

15. Recalling the various resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women concerning the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the convening of a World Conference on Women to be held in 1995, the Commission decided to convene a European regional preparatory meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women by the end of 1994. It invited Governments and organizations in the region to contribute actively to the preparation of such a meeting and requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a list of non-governmental organizations eligible to participate in accordance with the definition of eligibility used for the World Conference. The Commission outlined the agenda for the preparatory meeting and requested the Executive Secretary to proceed with the organization of the meeting, provided that adequate financing, in cash and in kind, be made available. It invited member States to consider contributing funding to this end.

Decision L (48). Preparation for and organization of the annual session

16. The Commission decided on the methodology for preparing its annual session, as well as the structure and content of the discussions during the session.

Decision M (48). Amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the ECE

17. In accordance with paragraph 15 of its terms of reference and its Rule of Procedure No. 55, and stressing the recent increase of its membership as well as the importance of the political and economic reforms taking place in member countries, the Commission decided to amend its rules of procedure and requested the Executive Secretary to inform the Economic and Social Council of this decision.

2. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

18. In its resolution 49/3 on the Tehran Declaration on Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Technology-Led Industrialization in Asia and the Pacific, the Commission recalled the Beijing Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and reiterated the urgent need to spread the development momentum to all countries of the region. The enhancement of the overall dynamic performance of the region, created through increased regional and subregional cooperation and the integration into the world economy of the region's least developed, island developing and disadvantaged economies in transition, required the expansion of trade, increased investment and national capacity-building. All United Nations bodies and specialized agencies concerned, as well as regional and subregional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, multilateral funding agencies, bilateral aid agencies and donor Governments, were invited to provide technical and financial assistance to those countries in order to achieve the

objectives of the Tehran Declaration and the Regional Strategy and Action Plan. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to mobilize resources for the implementation of the recommendations of the Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology, the Tehran Declaration and the Regional Strategy and Action Plan. It also requested him to report to the Commission at its fifty-first and subsequent sessions; and to convene in 1996 a regional conference of senior officials, representatives of concerned United Nations bodies and agencies and other relevant organizations, and the private sector, in order to review and assess progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology, the Tehran Declaration, and the Regional Strategy and Action Plan, and to report thereon to the Commission at its fifty-third session, in 1997.

19. In its resolution 49/1 on implementation of the action programme on regional economic cooperation in trade and investment, the Executive Secretary was called upon to accord priority, subject to available financial resources, to the activities of the secretariat in the implementation of the action programme for regional economic cooperation in trade and investment, including such areas as review and analysis of regional trade patterns, strengthening of the Regional Trade Information Network and networking of trade-related research institutions, enhancement of national capabilities in quality assurance, sectoral foreign-direct-investment inflows and analysis of foreign-direct-investment policies; establishment of a regional investment information and promotion service, development of export-oriented small and medium enterprises; resolution of environmental issues related to trade and investment; assistance to disadvantaged economies in transition in specific sectors and intraregional cooperation in trade and investment. In that context all members and associate members were urged to extend support to and participate actively in the implementation of the action programme for regional economic cooperation in trade and investment. The Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and interested United Nations agencies and organizations, as well as bilateral donor countries and the members and associate members of the Commission, were invited to collaborate actively with the secretariat in its efforts to implement the Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment. The Executive Secretary will report annually on progress in the implementation of the Action Programme, beginning with the fiftieth session of the Commission.

20. In its resolution 49/10 on the strengthening of ESCAP operational activities, the Commission reaffirmed that it was essential that the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields should include provisions for strengthening the regional commissions of the Economic and Social Council to effectively meet development needs in their respective regions. The Commission stressed that accumulated experience of the regional commissions in executing operational activities should be fully utilized for providing further impetus to the development of the developing members and associate members of ESCAP. In calling upon all parties to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system at the regional level through a fully coordinated approach to fulfilling the needs of developing countries in Asia and the Pacific, the Commission urged that the coordination of operational activities among United Nations organizations, programmes and funds as well as those of the specialized agencies should be improved under ESCAP team leadership at the regional level,

taking into account the comparative advantages of ESCAP in such areas as information gathering, monitoring economic developments and promoting cooperation with and among ESCAP member Governments, including the provision of technical cooperation. The Executive Secretary was requested, in consultation with United Nations organizations, programmes and funds as well as those agencies engaged in operational activities in the ESCAP region, to submit to the Commission at its fiftieth session a report on ways and means to implement at the regional level decisions taken in that regard by the General Assembly or related developments. The Commission decided to include the question of strengthening the coordination of the regional operational activities in the agenda for its fiftieth and subsequent sessions at periodic intervals.

21. In its resolution 49/8 on strengthening assistance to the least developed countries, the Commission reaffirmed the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, in which the States Members of the United Nations stressed, inter alia, the need for full implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, noting the establishment, by Commission resolution 48/2 of 23 April 1992 on restructuring the conference structure of the Commission, of the Special Body on Least Developed and Land-locked Developing Countries to help accelerate the pace of development in the least developed and land-locked developing countries within the context of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. In that context, while it recognized that the least developed countries had the primary responsibility for their development based on appropriate domestic policies, the Commission expressed concern about the problems of the least developed countries within the context of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. Member Governments and international and multilateral organizations were urged to continue to pay special attention to the special problems of the least developed countries and to render all possible assistance in support of the development efforts of the least developed countries in implementing the Programme of Action for the 1990s, particularly the preparations for the mid-term review at the regional level to be undertaken by the Special Body on Least Developed and Land-locked Developing Countries early in 1995. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was requested to initiate follow-up action in carrying out the feasibility study for the establishment at Dhaka of a centre for research on the least developed countries. The ESCAP secretariat was requested to strengthen its programmes to meet the special needs and concerns of the least developed countries in the region and report to the Commission at its fiftieth session on the implementation of the resolution.

22. In its resolution 49/9 on the eradication of preventable diseases in the Asia and Pacific region as a component of social and economic development, the Commission endorsed the ongoing efforts of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and other international organizations, as well as national Governments and non-governmental organizations, to eradicate or substantially reduce preventable diseases in the region. Member States were urged to take all necessary measures to achieve the goal set by the World Health Organization of eradicating poliomyelitis in the region by the year 2000 or earlier, urging that they coordinate action to control the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases by, inter alia, providing health information and education; promoting responsible behaviour, nutrition and hygiene; and discouraging such unhealthy

activities as smoking and alcohol and drug abuse. The Commission called on member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to accord high priority to preventive health care in their economic and social development plans, in the context of the Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond. The World Health Organization was invited to submit a report on progress in eradicating preventable diseases in the region at the 1994 ministerial-level meeting of ESCAP to be convened for the purpose of reviewing implementation of the Strategy. The Executive Secretary was requested to work in close association with the World Health Organization to facilitate the presentation of such a report.

23. In its resolution 49/6 on a Proclamation and Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, the Commission welcomed the signing of the Proclamation and the establishment of a trust fund for the Decade, on the adoption of Commission resolution 48/3, with generous contributions from the Governments of Australia, China, Hong Kong and the Republic of Korea. In adopting the Agenda for Action for the Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, the Commission urged all Governments in the ESCAP region to stress their commitment to the full participation and equality of people with disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region by joining as signatories to the Proclamation at the highest levels of government. Governments, donor agencies and the private sector were called upon to contribute to the Decade trust fund to ensure the successful implementation of the Agenda for Action. The United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and other concerned United Nations bodies and agencies were invited, in close cooperation with ESCAP, to strengthen their support for the building of national capabilities for effective implementation of the Agenda for Action. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to give special attention, in collaboration with all concerned United Nations bodies and agencies and non-governmental organizations, to the development of regional activities in support of the implementation of the Agenda for Action for the full participation and equality of people with disabilities in the Asia and Pacific region, and to include an item on progress in implementing the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, incorporating information on the signatories to the Proclamation, in the agenda for the regional ministerial-level meeting to be convened in 1994 in preparation for the World Summit for Social Development to be held in 1995.

24. In its resolution 49/7 on implementation of decisions of the General Assembly on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including Agenda 21, in the Asia and the Pacific region, the Commission welcomed the cooperation and coordination among United Nations bodies and agencies on environmental issues through mechanisms such as the Inter-agency Committee on Environment and Development, the Inter-agency Task Force on Water for Asia and the Pacific and the Inter-agency Committee on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific. In expressing satisfaction with the development of a framework of regional action for sustainable development as recommended by the High-level Meeting on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in Kuala Lumpur from 15 to 19 February 1993, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to articulate further the regional dimensions of Agenda 21, taking into consideration the desire in the Asia and Pacific region, as expressed in the Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, to intensify efforts at national, regional and

subregional levels to integrate environmental concerns into development planning and processes in order to protect and improve the quality of the environment and to implement appropriate natural resource development and management policies and practices. The Commission recommended that the General Assembly reinforce the technical capability of the ESCAP secretariat to enable it to perform the leading role within the United Nations system in coordinating regional and subregional activities for the implementation of Agenda 21. It also recommended that regional preparatory work be undertaken, as appropriate, towards the formulation of an international convention on desertification and requested members and associate members of the Commission to undertake concerted efforts to provide their input for that purpose. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to seek the cooperation and involvement of subregional organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Economic Cooperation Organization and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, as well as other organizations, in furthering the implementation of Agenda 21, and to urge donor support for projects and programmes in support of Agenda 21, by utilizing a substantial proportion of the extrabudgetary resources committed to the secretariat and other agencies and organs of the United Nations active in the Asia and Pacific region. The Executive Secretary was requested to convene a ministerial-level conference on environment and development in 1995 to discuss all issues relating to environment, including the implementation of Agenda 21, and to submit a report on specific plans for implementing Agenda 21 in the region to the Commission at its fiftieth session.

3. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

25. The sessions of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean are held biennially, thus no session was held during the period under consideration.

26. The most important activity of the Commission during this period was the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference on Population and Development, held in Mexico City from 29 April to 4 May 1993. The Regional Conference was co-sponsored by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Population Fund and the Latin American Demographic Centre.

27. The Regional Conference was preparatory for the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, September 1994) and took note of the adoption by the Latin American and Caribbean members of ECLAC of a declaration entitled "Latin American and Caribbean Consensus on Population and Development" (CRP.SEG/1 Add.1/Rev.2). The Consensus was adopted as a contribution from Latin America and the Caribbean to the preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development. It expresses a concrete and coordinated position of the region with respect to the main issues of economic and social development and demographic situation, establishing an appropriate link with environmentally sustainable development, migration, equality of woman and social equity.

28. Bearing in mind the recommendations and proposals contained in the Consensus, the Conference decided to promote the formulation of a Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development (resolution 1 Rev.1) and adopted a

resolution on the observer status for associate members of regional commissions at the International Conference on Population and Development (resolution 2).

4. Economic Commission for Africa

29. The Conference of African Ministers responsible for economic development and planning adopted the resolutions summarized below.

Resolution 742 (XXVIII). Strategic objectives for Africa's economic development in the 1990s

30. The Conference of Ministers welcomed the document "Strategic objectives for Africa's economic development in the 1990s", prepared and elaborated by the Economic Commission for Africa as a synthesis reaffirming and updating Africa's long-standing strategies in the spirit of the theme for the twenty-eighth session of the Commission/nineteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers: "Taking Africa into the twenty-first century".

Resolution 743 (XXVIII). Implementation of the Abuja Treaty for the establishment of the African Economic Community

31. The Conference of Ministers reaffirmed its commitment to both the Abuja Treaty and the effective establishment of the African Economic Community, noted with satisfaction efforts deployed by the Joint Organization of African Unity/Economic Commission for Africa/African Development Bank secretariat to help establish the African Economic Community and called upon member States to speed up the ratification of the Abuja Treaty and the protocols annexed to it, and to ensure its immediate entry into force.

Resolution 744 (XXVIII). African strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21

32. The Conference of Ministers adopted the African Strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21, urged member States to incorporate as many of the Strategies as possible in the formulation of their own national strategies and further urged member States to establish and/or strengthen mechanisms for the mobilization of resources at the national, subregional and regional levels for the implementation of the Strategies.

Resolution 745 (XXVIII). Strengthening and rationalization of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Economic Commission for Africa

33. The Conference of Ministers, among other things, renewed the appeal which it had made in 1991 to the General Assembly for the financing of additional posts at the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Economic Commission for Africa within both the Professional and General Services category and for the provision of additional financial resources. It also requested the Executive Secretary to submit to the Conference of Ministers, in good time, a programme for the strengthening and rationalization of the centres.

Resolution 746 (XXVIII). Human Development Agenda for Africa in the 1990s

34. The Conference of Ministers endorsed the Human Development Agenda for Africa in the 1990s and urged African Governments to give priority to improving the conditions of human development through the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated strategy of development and structural transformation, in which human development concerns and measures should form the core, as enunciated in the Agenda for Human Development for Africa in the 1990s.

Resolution 747 (XXVIII). Strategic Agenda for Development Management in Africa in the 1990s

35. The Conference of Ministers endorsed and adopted the Strategic Agenda for Development Management in Africa in the 1990s, recommended that African Governments as well as regional and international organizations and associations use the Strategic Agenda as a guide for action in their efforts to improve development management capacities in Africa in the 1990s, and requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to coordinate and monitor activities related to the implementation of the Strategic Agenda and report to the Conference regularly on progress made in the implementation of the Agenda.

Resolution 748 (XXVIII). Population, family and sustainable development

36. The Conference of Ministers approved the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development. It requested African Governments to use the Declaration in all preparatory activities for the International Conference on Population and Development and ensure that their delegations to the International Conference and to future United Nations Population Commission meetings use the Declaration as a reference document to ensure adequate consideration of the priority interests of Africa in population activities. The Conference of Ministers also invited the United Nations Population Fund to step up its assistance to national and regional population programmes in Africa.

Resolution 750 (XXVIII). International Year of the Family

37. The Conference of Ministers reaffirmed the role of African families as the natural and fundamental units of societies; as vital resources for constructive change and development; as the first and last units of societies to be affected by decisions and policies concerning economic planning and development, sociocultural and political changes, population issues, education, health, nutrition, housing, sanitation, environment and other developmental issues.

Resolution 751 (XXVIII). Africa's preparation for the mid-term review of the Lomé IV Convention

38. The Conference of Ministers called on African countries to establish strong common positions on the key issues in the forthcoming mid-term review of the Lomé IV Convention with the objective of expanding African countries' exports to the European Community.

Resolution 753 (XXVIII). Women in Development, the African Regional Preparatory Meeting (1994) for the World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995)

39. The Conference of Ministers called upon the secretariats of the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity, as well as the Bureau of the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee, to collaborate closely in the preparations of the Fifth Regional Conference (1994) for the Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in order to help define Africa's Plan of Action for consideration at the global Platform of Action to be put forward in Beijing in 1995. It urged member States of the Commission to institute appropriate information and communication campaigns at the national level which would harmonize with subregional and regional strategies to sensitize and create awareness among the various interested constituents of the region and adopted the agenda and thematic outline of the Fifth Regional Conference on Women.

Resolution 754 (XXVIII). Rationalization and harmonization of institutions sponsored by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

40. The Conference of Ministers called on the African Development Bank to assist in the strengthening of the capacity development of Commission-sponsored institutions and give favourable consideration to those institutions for the award of consultancy and subcontract services. The Conference of Ministers further called on the European Commission and the Executive Secretary of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group to give positive consideration to the project proposals of Commission-sponsored institutions in the context of the Lomé IV Convention.

Resolution 755 (XXVIII). African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development

41. The Conference of Ministers called on member States to ratify the constitution of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development if they had not yet done so, and meet their financial obligations. It called on the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to strengthen their support to the Centre in the mobilization of the financial, scientific and technical resources necessary for the implementation of the research and other programmes of the Centre.

Resolution 756 (XXVIII). Strengthening the Multidisciplinary Advisory Group of the Economic Commission for Africa

42. The Conference of Ministers, among other things, called on member States to make increasing use of the available resources and expertise of the ECA Multidisciplinary Regional Advisory Group in the search for coherent and lasting solutions to their socio-economic development problems.

Resolution 757 (XXVIII). Restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of the Commission

43. The Conference of Ministers, having reviewed the existing intergovernmental machinery of the Commission, 9/ decided that the structure and functioning of the intergovernmental machinery of the Commission should be as follows:

"A. ORGANS DEALING WITH OVERALL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

"1. Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning (the Commission) and its Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole

"In order to better reflect its work and mandate, the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Economic Development and Planning is renamed the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning. The Conference will meet annually. Its meetings will be preceded by those of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole.

"The special problems of the African least developed countries will be treated as a separate agenda item at the annual meetings of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning. The Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries is hereby abolished.

9/ See document E/ECA/CM.19/19.

"2. Intergovernmental Committees of Experts of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Economic Commission for Africa

"The five intergovernmental Committees of Experts of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Economic Commission for Africa shall continue to meet every two years and report to the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Trade, Regional Cooperation and Integration and to the Commission through the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole. The five existing follow-up Committees of Experts of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Economic Commission for Africa are hereby abolished.

"B. THEMATIC CONFERENCES OF MINISTERS

"1. Conference of African Ministers responsible for Human Development and its Committee of Experts

"The Conference of African Ministers responsible for Human Development will address issues related to sustainable development and transformation through the effective implementation of human-centred development strategies and programmes. The Conference will meet every four years, and at least once within the period of the Medium-term Plan.

"The Conference will have a Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen which will meet every two years. Procedure for the establishment of the membership and functioning of the Committee shall be established by the Conference at its first meeting.

"This Conference subsumes the functions of the following existing subsidiary organs: the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Human Resources Planning and Development; the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Social Affairs; and the Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa. These subsidiary bodies are hereby abolished.

"2. Conference of African Ministers responsible for Sustainable Development and the Environment and its Committee of Experts

"The Conference of African Ministers responsible for Sustainable Development will address the challenges of sustainable development and environment in Africa, particularly in terms of the promotion of strategies and programmes based on the interrelationships between agriculture (especially food supply), rural development and water resources, population, the environment and human settlements. The Conference will meet every four years and at least once within the period of the Medium-term Plan.

"The Conference will have a Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Fifteen, which will meet every two years. Procedure for the establishment

of the membership and functioning of the Committee should be established by the Conference at its first meeting.

"This Conference subsumes the functions of the following existing subsidiary organs: the Conference of African Ministers of Environment and the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment, which are hereby abolished.

"3. Conference of African Ministers responsible for Finance and its Technical Committee of Experts

"This Conference will continue to meet every two years.

"4. Conference of African Ministers responsible for Trade, Regional Cooperation and Integration and Tourism and its Technical Committee of Experts

"This Conference will address issues related to the trade, tourism and institutional aspects of regional economic cooperation and integration. The Conference will also deal with issues related to commodity prices and global trade negotiations. It will also address issues concerning ECA-sponsored institutions and African intergovernmental organizations. The Conference will meet every two years.

"The function of existing Conferences of African Ministers of Trade and Tourism will be assumed by this Conference. These existing Conferences are accordingly hereby abolished.

"5. Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications and its Committee of Experts

"The Conference will oversee the implementation of the programme for the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa. It will continue to meet every two years.

"6. Conference of African Ministers of Industry and its Committee of Experts

"The Conference will continue to meet every two years and will pay special attention to the implementation of the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade in Africa.

"7. Conference of African Ministers responsible for the Development and Utilization of Mineral Resources and Energy and its Committee of Experts

"The Conference will continue to meet every two years. Its scope will now embrace energy issues.

"C. TECHNICAL SUBSIDIARY BODIES

"The following technical subsidiary bodies will report to the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning, through the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole:

"1. United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa

"The Conference will continue to meet every three years.

"2. African Regional Conference for Science and Technology

"This Conference will meet every two years and will foster the development and transfer of science and technology. Its terms of reference include consideration of issues related to scientific and technological information. The function of the existing Technical Advisory Committee on Nuclear Science and Technology in Africa will be integrated into the Regional Conference. The Committee is therefore hereby abolished.

"3. Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Demographers and Information Scientists

"The joint Conference will continue to meet every two years.

"4. Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development

"The Committee will continue to meet annually."

Resolution 758 (XXVIII). The role of cartography, remote sensing and geographic information systems in sustainable development

44. The Conference of Ministers encouraged member States to actively participate in the seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, to be held in Iran in 1997, and the seventeenth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, to be held in Geneva in 1994. It requested the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to intensify efforts, in collaboration with the Regional Remote-Sensing Centre, Ouagadougou, the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing, the Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys, the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing, the CRTNA and CGA, to coordinate in favour of member States activities of United Nations bodies and those of the above-named institutions in the field of cartography, remote sensing and geographic information systems.

Resolution 759 (XXVIII). Data acquisition in the field of cartography and remote sensing in Africa

45. The Conference of Ministers appealed to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Development Programme to set up, strengthen and support national, subregional and regional environment information systems programmes.

Resolution 760 (XXVIII). International hydrogeological mapping programme for Africa and the study of cartography for development

46. The Conference of Ministers congratulated the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing on the successful implementation of the work assigned.

Resolution 762 (XXVIII). Reactivation of the Trans-African Highway Bureau

47. The Conference of Ministers decided that a meeting of plenipotentiaries be convened before October 1993 to consider, adopt and sign the draft statute of the Trans-African Highway Bureau that would subsequently be submitted to member States for ratification.

Resolution 763 (XXVIII). Utilization of human resources in Africa

48. The Conference of Ministers appealed to African Governments to do their utmost to give priority to the employment of skilled Africans, particularly in the transport and communications sectors, by establishing a transparent incentive package to endure the retention of such skilled manpower.

Resolution 764 (XXVIII). Development of building-materials industries in Africa

49. The Conference of Ministers supported the development of the project on building-materials industry in Africa and called for its immediate implementation.

Resolution 765 (XXVIII). Tourism development in Africa

50. The Conference of Ministers requested the General Assembly to provide the Economic Commission for Africa with the appropriate human and financial resources to enable it to provide necessary assistance for the continuation of the growth of tourism in Africa and the improvement of its performance. It invited the Executive Secretary, the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity and the President of the African Development Bank, as well as

other like-minded institutions to assist member States in the mobilization of the funds needed to finance such projects through the organization of round-table meetings with development partners at the subregional level by the end of 1994.

Resolution 767 (XXVIII). Programme of work and priorities of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

51. The Conference of Ministers, among other things, appealed to the Secretary-General, in making his proposals for the 1994-1995 programme budget, to give special consideration to the development needs of the African region by providing the Commission with adequate resources to enable it to carry out those responsibilities assigned to it under the Medium-term Plan.

Resolution 769 (XXVIII). Strengthening the role of the Economic Commission for Africa to provide team leadership and coordination of United Nations system activities with a regional perspective in Africa

52. The Conference of Ministers, recalling General Assembly resolutions 46/235, in which restructuring measures were proposed concerning the regional commissions, and 46/151, which established the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, recalling also Economic and Social Council resolutions 1992/51 and 1992/52, and encouraged by the Secretary-General's expressed intention to strengthen the regional commissions as the regional arms of a single, integrated United Nations programme in the economic and social fields:

"1. Calls upon the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to provide an updated legislative framework for the regional commissions concretizing the far-reaching process of reorganization of the United Nations system, redistributing responsibilities among its entities and emphasizing the role of the regional commissions as arms of a single United Nations programme;

"2. Calls upon the Secretary-General to strengthen the Inter-agency Task Force which brings together United Nations system agencies and leading regional organizations, with the aim of enhancing efficiency and effectiveness through a fully coordinated approach to programme planning, resource allocation and implementation in order to meet the development needs of African countries;

"3. Urges all United Nations system agencies active in Africa to work in close partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa in the framework of the Inter-agency Task Force monitoring the implementation of the New Agenda;

"4. Calls upon the Secretary-General to strengthen, through specific measures, the role of the Economic Commission for Africa as team leader and

coordinator of United Nations system activities with a regional perspective in order to ensure rational implementation of the strategic objectives for Africa's economic development within the context of the New Agenda;

"5. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to submit to the twenty-ninth session of the Commission/twentieth meeting of the Conference of Ministers a report on the decisions that will have been taken by the General Assembly on the restructuring of the United Nations system in the economic and social sectors, including specific measures for strengthening the Economic Commission for Africa."

II. WORK OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

A. Economic Commission for Europe

53. Events during the past year in Europe have been dominated by the consequences of disintegration in the East, particularly the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia. The process of unprecedented change in the region which began in 1989 has continued unabated. Europe has in a short space of time changed beyond recognition, posing major challenges to both the countries of the region and the international community as a whole. These developments have led to the emergence of a sizeable number of new States, most of which are already engaged in the long and arduous task of transition to a market economy and integration into the world economy.

54. At the same time political reforms in some of these countries have been accompanied by an upsurge of nationalist sentiment, ethnic violence and aspirations towards nationhood. The war in former Yugoslavia has served to illustrate the magnitude of the problem. Although a consensus could not be reached on the peace plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina put forward by the representatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and of the European Community, negotiations on a new joint strategy have reached an advanced state in the Security Council. The strategy would aim to turn the Muslim enclaves in Bosnia into safe areas under the protection of United Nations peace-keeping forces. It would also call for the establishment of a war-crimes tribunal, the first to be set up by the international community since the end of the Second World War.

55. The conflict has brought about widespread destruction and the displacement of 3 million people. Every effort must be made by all parts of the United Nations system to contribute to the reconstruction of the war-torn zones by rebuilding the economic and social infrastructure of the countries of former Yugoslavia and rehabilitating displaced persons. The Council has also taken up the question of special problems arising from the sanctions imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), particularly in the area of international trade.

56. For the new leaders of the countries in transition it has proved relatively easy to dismantle the old structures but extremely difficult to build the new. This process of transformation has not been facilitated during the past year, which was the fourth successive year of declining economic activity in Eastern Europe. While there are growing differences among the transition economies,

there was a cumulative drop in output of more than 30 per cent. In some of the more advanced transition countries substantial progress has been made in setting up the institutions of a democratic society and a market economy and there were signs that the economic downturn was beginning to bottom out. However, in others institution-building is still at a relatively early stage and subject to considerable strains from political fragility and in some cases from civil war and armed conflict. In the Russian Federation other States that are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Baltic States, for example, the slump in output deepened through 1992.

57. In general, industry has tended to bear the brunt of the fall in output, although agricultural output also declined in most of Eastern Europe in 1992. Unemployment rose sharply as industrial restructuring got under way, bankruptcy laws were put into place, privatization began to spread into traditional sectors of the economy and market forces began to influence the behaviour of the new entrepreneurs. At the same time, high rates of inflation continue to be a major problem in the transition economies, although these vary considerably among individual countries. While inflation fell in a number of East European countries to manageable proportions, in others it accelerated to rates above 200 per cent. Hyper-inflation has affected the war-torn zones of former Yugoslavia.

58. The widespread and enthusiastic support for radical political and economic change that followed the revolutions in 1989 has given way to a large measure of disillusionment and discontent, since the costs of adjustment have proved to be much higher than expected. While a majority of the peoples of Eastern Europe by and large are in favour of the market economy, in only a few countries has a national consensus emerged behind a well-articulated programme of reform with a clear programme of action and a realistic indication of what it will cost and the time it will take to achieve. Moreover, there is growing concern in those countries at the loss of the economic and social safety nets which were a feature of the former communist regimes. Moreover, efforts to forcibly speed up the reform process have brought only limited economic results and a good measure of disappointment in many of the transition countries.

59. The economic outlook for Western Europe remains sombre. Against a background of turbulent foreign-exchange markets and major economies in recession, prospects for 1993 have deteriorated sharply and consumer and business confidence are at very low levels. After growth of only 1 per cent in 1992, stagnation in West European gross domestic product (GDP) in 1993 seems increasingly likely. This is likely to result in a further rise in unemployment significantly above 10 per cent. Moreover, in Germany the unexpected escalation in the budgetary costs of supporting reconstruction in the former German Democratic Republic led to a sharp increase in inflationary pressures and, through higher German interest rates, had a depressing effect on prospects for the recovery of activity throughout Western Europe in 1992. A reduction of interest rates in the early months of 1993 has encouraged hopes that a slow recovery may be beginning in the West.

60. Historic movements in the West towards further integration have advanced less rapidly in this context. The Single Market of the European Community (EC) came into effect at the end of 1992 and progress has been made, albeit somewhat haltingly, towards ratification of the Maastricht Treaty for greater economic

and political union within the EC. The European Economic Area brought about by the closer association between the countries that are members of the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA) and the EC countries is expected to enter into force early in the autumn of 1993. Meanwhile, negotiations have begun with a number of EFTA countries on their application for membership of the European Community. Association agreements have also been negotiated between the EC and a number of countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with the recognition in principle of full membership for those countries as the ultimate goal. These steps serve to underscore the importance of the integration process for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has successfully concluded negotiations for the admission of Mexico, which, together with Canada and the United States of America, will create the largest free-trade area in the world.

61. Despite recession, Western Governments have reaffirmed their commitment to support economic transformation in the East and help maintain the momentum of domestic reform programmes through a strategy of technical assistance, improved market access for Eastern exports and short-run financing in order to open the way for private investment in the basic task of economic restructuring. The Group of 24 PHARE programme of assistance, together with the TACIS programme of the EC, have played a key role in the technical assistance provided. However, the outlook for foreign private investment in the Eastern countries remains uncertain. The well-known deterrents to investment include political uncertainties, which are considerable in some countries, incomplete market infrastructures and delays in resolving such basic problems as property rights. The much-delayed recovery of activity in the Eastern economies, together with the deepening recession in Western Europe, has led Western companies to reassess their investments in the East and to increasingly tend to postpone new investment.

62. Thus most of the transition economies are dependent for outside funds on official assistance, bilateral and multilateral, and government-guaranteed bilateral credits. Altogether some $40 billion of financing was made available to all the transition countries in 1992. Only a small proportion of this money, however, consisted of grant aid or concessionary finance. About one half of the sum is accounted for by debt rescheduling and other forms of special financing. These figures do not include the $170 billion in net government transfers which the federal Government in Germany made in 1991 and 1992 to the new eastern Länder.

63. The distribution of financial assistance to the transition countries remains uneven. The countries which have had the most success in attracting private capital are those which have the least difficulty in meeting requirements for short-run balance-of-payments support from official sources. Thus the successor States of the Soviet Union, excluding the Russian Federation, have obtained very few commitments of help and even less in actual disbursement. The Baltic States have experienced similar difficulties. The problems surrounding short-term assistance are complex and include delays on the part of donors in meeting pledges, but the transition countries themselves are often unable to meet the standard requirements laid down by international financial institutions and individual donors for obtaining the funds. In some cases their commitment to reforms appears to be hesitant, although this is perhaps a

reflection of the enormous difficulties they face and doubts about their own ability to overcome them, aggravated by the delay in receiving assistance.

64. The considerable problems facing economic reform in the Russian Federation have been greatly exacerbated by unsettled questions of political authority and legitimacy. The constitutional crisis has thrown into stark relief the seriousness of the economic problems of the country. The spectre of economic and political instability in the Russian Federation spilling over into the countries of Eastern Europe has alarmed Governments in both East and West. This has led to agreement among the group of seven industrialized nations on a special package of emergency assistance for the Russian Federation.

65. The Coordinating Conference on Assistance to the New Independent States, held in Tokyo in October 1992, following the Coordinating Conferences held in Washington, D.C. in January 1992 and in Lisbon in May 1992, agreed to pay close attention to the continuing emergency needs of the new independent States (NIS) but to give overall encouragement to a move towards longer-term technical assistance. It agreed to place added emphasis on increasing the integration of the NIS into the international financial system. It decided to tailor assistance and international cooperation to the specific needs of each individual NIS country through the establishment of country consultative groups to be led by the World Bank.

66. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) has from its inception provided a forum for region-wide European and transatlantic dialogue and cooperation. In recent months the CSCE process has again moved to centre stage in regional political negotiations with an agenda for a comprehensive concept of security and stability on the continent in the post-cold-war period. The Paris Charter for a New Europe, signed in November 1990, was a first important step in this direction and was reaffirmed by the Helsinki Document 1992: Managing Change. The process evolved further in 1993 with the holding of the first meeting of the CSCE Economic Forum, designed to underscore the needs of the transition process. ECE member Governments have given strong support to the continuing close cooperation between CSCE and ECE, which has traditionally served as a forum for the multilateral implementation of CSCE provisions in the economic and environmental fields.

67. New extra-institutional processes initiated recently within the region as a result of ad hoc political initiatives have continued in 1992 in the environmental, transport and forestry sectors. A Conference of Ministers of Environment was convened in April 1993 in Lucerne. The Conference adopted a declaration which endorsed the political dimension of the process "Environment for Europe". The process is built around a strategy consisting of an Environmental Action Plan for Central and Eastern Europe, a report on the state of the environment in Europe and an Environmental Programme for Europe. The ECE will play a key role in the Programme. Preparations were launched this year for a Second European Transport Conference of Ministers, to be held in Greece in March 1994, which, among other things, will further the elaboration of a pan-European transport concept and infrastructure programme. A third initiative is the Second Ministerial Conference on European Temperate Forests, which will be held in Helsinki in June 1993, for which ECE will provide secretariat services for follow-up action.

68. At the subregional level there has been an intensification and multiplication of cooperation. A number of such subregional groupings stretch from the Arctic region and Baltic Sea area through the Central European Initiative and the Danube River Basin to the Balkans, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea area, where the emergence of the CIS States has brought new activity.

69. The ECE, at its forty-eighth session, in April 1993, endorsed the decisions taken at its forty-fifth session, notably decision O (45) in which it defined environment, transport, statistics, trade facilitation and economic analysis as priority areas of activity. These were reflected in new decisions adopted by the session on questions of environment and sustainable development, sustainable development in the chemical industry and cooperation in the field of transport. A further decision added strong support to the Commissions's work to assist countries in making the transition to a market economy and integrating their economies into the European and global economy. The decision endorsed the programme of workshops on practical issues relating to transition, which has been carried out in the course of the past year, and called for the further development of these activities, taking into account the special needs of the growing number of new members of the ECE. Finally, another decision called for further economic cooperation in the Mediterranean region in the light of the Final Act of Helsinki adopted by CSCE.

70. In the course of the past year ECE has made substantial progress in the implementation of three new environmental Conventions, on Environmental Impact Assessment, on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. Work has begun on follow-up action to implement Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The Commission has called for a feasibility study of the proposal to convene a regional conference on transport and the environment within the framework of the ECE. The Commission has played and will continue to play a key role in the Environment for Europe process.

71. In 1992 progress was made towards the development of a coherent road-transport system in Europe, with special emphasis on the development of transport infrastructure and transport corridors, including the new Via Baltica. Emphasis continued to be placed on combined transport and road safety. A second European Road Safety Week will be organized under the auspices of the ECE in 1995. Work has continued on a study to establish a network of main European inland waterways of international importance, with a view to the elaboration of a European Agreement (AGN).

72. The Conference of European Statisticians welcomed the progress made in coordinating the work of the Conference of European Statisticians with that of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), including the Joint Programme Review (JPR), in order to avoid duplication in the statistical work programmes of those organizations. Attention focused on the Conference's work on environmental statistics, transition issues, the European Comparison Programme and statistical information technology.

73. The Economic Survey of Europe in 1992-1993, published by ECE, contains an in-depth analysis of the European transition countries; their output and demand; labour markets, prices and incomes; foreign trade and payments; macroeconomic policies; market reforms; and progress made in privatization. The Survey also reviews developments in Central, East and South-East European countries, the countries of former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union, and the Baltic Republics. Another chapter discusses the Western response to the transition in Central and Eastern Europe in aid and trade, analysing the financial flows and commitments of assistance as well as East-West cooperation agreements and market access.

74. In the field of trade facilitation, the development of United Nations/Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (EDIFACT) messages has rapidly progressed within the framework of the EDIFACT Joint Rapporteurs Programme under the ECE Working Party on Trade Facilitation. Work has also continued on the development of an interregional project on international trade facilitation, which will be implemented by the five regional commissions jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The Commission also welcomed the establishment of an intersecretariat task force between ECE, UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre (ITC) to improve coordination in the field of trade facilitation, particularly in view of the new UNCTAD programme on trade efficiency.

75. The Commission welcomed the adoption of the final text of the guide on legal aspects of privatization in industry, prepared under the auspices of the Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry, and urged rapid preparation of a new guide on the financing of East-West trade/privatization in Central and Eastern Europe.

76. The Commission expressed satisfaction with the results achieved in implementing the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project and its demonstration zones. Progress has also been made in elaborating an interregional project on Global Energy Efficiency 21 to facilitate information exchange on energy efficiency on a global scale. This project was submitted to UNCED as a proposed element of Agenda 21.

77. The Commission stressed the importance of the follow-up process to the High-Level Meeting on Cooperation and Sustainable Development in the Chemical Industries, held in Warsaw in March 1992 as a follow-up to the Bergen Conference. Support was expressed for the proposal of the Government of Poland to establish a regional environmental management centre for the chemical industry, as well as for the pilot project demonstrating the environmental clean-up of selected chemical-production sites in the economies in transition.

78. During the past year the Commission has maintained its intensive cooperation and coordination of activities with other international organizations and European institutions active in the region, with a view to avoiding duplication of work and ensuring the optimum use of resources. Close collaboration exists between the ECE and the European Community, OECD, EBRD and the Council of Europe.

79. ECE continued to make a meaningful contribution to global programmes of the United Nations. The Commission submitted to UNCED a compendium of its conventions in the field of environmental protection. As indicated above, work has already begun in ECE for follow-up action to implement Agenda 21. As a regional preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in September 1994, ECE held a European Population Conference jointly with UNFPA and the Council of Europe in March 1993. At its forty-eighth session, the Commission decided to convene a high-level regional preparatory meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995. It also endorsed work under way in socio-economic activities as a contribution to the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen in March 1995. Each year more that 30 countries from outside the ECE region participate actively in the work of the Commission, and the results of its work are made available to the developing countries of other regions.

B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

80. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), at its forty-eighth session in Beijing, in April 1992, adopted resolution 48/2 on restructuring the conference structure of the Commission and thereby made a historic decision to restructure its subsidiary bodies, reorient its programme on a thematic and multidisciplinary basis and reorganize the secretariat in order to enhance its effectiveness and response to the development requirements of Asia and the Pacific.

81. Under the revised intergovernmental structure, the first session of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation was convened in Bangkok in October 1992, while the first session of its Steering Group was held in New Delhi in November 1992. The Steering Group considered and adopted a programme of action for regional cooperation in trade and investment, which was submitted to the Commission at its forty-ninth session through the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation. In its deliberations on policies and perspectives for economic and social development in the ESCAP region, the Commission noted that uncertainties in the global economic environment, increased trading opportunities within the region and increasing trade and investment flows from the more dynamic economies to the lagging parts of the ESCAP region, as well as the growing convergence of macroeconomic policies among ESCAP members and associate members, had substantially strengthened the prospects and potential for regional economic cooperation.

82. The theme topic "Expansion of investment and intraregional trade as a vehicle for enhancing regional economic cooperation and development in Asia and the Pacific", as presented in part two of The Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific, 1992, assessed the contribution of the trade-investment nexus to the process of industrial restructuring in the ESCAP region. Noting that major constraints had prevented a wider spread of economic growth among developing economies of the region, the Commission stressed that, given the inequality of development within regions and subregions, it was important to encourage foreign direct investment that would have significant effects on the development of appropriate skills and the technological capabilities and market-driven demand needed by the lagging economies of the region.

83. During 1992, the secretariat made preparations for convening the first session of the Special Body on Least Developed and Land-locked Developing Countries in Bangkok in February 1993. The Commission noted that the formidable structural constraints faced by the least developed and land-locked developing countries in Asia and the Pacific were largely responsible for their poor performance in respect of levels and growth rates of GDP, literacy rates, levels of agricultural and industrial outputs, and savings and investment. The Commission stressed that high priority should be accorded to those activities which would increase regional cooperation at bilateral, subregional and regional levels, particularly in the area of technical assistance, trade concessions, investment, and transit and transport facilities.

84. The Commission noted that the secretariat had also made preparation for convening the first session of the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries in Bangkok in February 1993. It was recognized that the continued activities of ESCAP (ESCAP) provided critically needed expertise in areas such as statistics, macroeconomics and planning, and trade promotion, through its Pacific Operations Centre, as well as its training and orientation programme, which is aimed at fostering better understanding and cooperation among Pacific island countries of the United Nations system as a whole and of ESCAP in particular.

85. The Commission expressed concern that, throughout the 1980s, a large number of Pacific island countries had experienced rather uneven economic performance and low growths. It was noted, however, that over the past few years many developing island Governments had taken serious steps to foster greater private-sector participation through judicious economic liberalization and deregulation. Moreover, the widened pattern of cooperation and development in the Asia and Pacific region had also increased opportunities for growth through deepened interdependence. The Commission stressed the major role that the relatively more industrialized and richer countries of the ESCAP region could play in strengthening the growth impulse in the disadvantaged economies of the Pacific island countries, particularly through the provision of expanded financial and technical assistance, and preferential market access. In that connection, the Commission reiterated that major benefits could be derived by the disadvantaged countries from the continued implementation of its resolution 46/8 of 13 June 1990 on technical and economic cooperation among developing countries for the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries.

86. The eighth session of the Committee of Statistics, its first session under the revised intergovernmental subsidiary structure of the Commission, was held in November 1992 and its report was submitted to the Commission at its forty-ninth session for endorsement. The Commission's special attention was drawn to the importance of statistics in the areas of poverty alleviation, the environment and sustainable development. It was felt that in those areas there was a dearth of data in most developing countries of the region. The Commission noted that the ESCAP secretariat had already commenced several activities during 1992, including the collection of appropriate environment statistics in the region and the publication of an operational handbook on data-collection methodologies. The Commission noted that despite fundamental changes in the arrangements under the regional advisory services funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which had adversely affected the whole statistics programme, the secretariat had been able to move rapidly in the direction of

assisting countries in transition to the market-oriented economy in introducing statistical methodology and standards as recommended by several international organizations. The special needs of the Russian Federation and the Asian CIS Republics were taken into account in drawing up the ESCAP work programme for the biennium 1994-1995. Attention had also been directed to selected special requirements of the least developed, land-locked and Pacific island developing countries for statistical capability-building, notably the need for basic data on national accounts, trade and prices. The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific carried out several important activities during 1992 and the focus of its work during phase VI will be on such critical areas as group training in electronic data processing and human resources development.

87. The Commission expressed satisfaction that as part of its programme activities the secretariat had convened several important ministerial meetings during 1992 that had discussed some of the major and emerging issues in the critical areas of transport and communications, population, and industrialization. The Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications was held at Bangkok in June 1992. It considered and endorsed a regional action programme for the second quinquennium of the Decade. The Commission agreed that the regional action programme was a concrete and effective tool for further promoting cooperation at the regional and subregional levels in transport and communications development. The Commission also agreed that an effective subregional approach should be developed in order to enhance the participation and cooperation of ESCAP members and associate members. The active involvement of national research and development institutions in transport and communications, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and concerned international and intergovernmental organizations, was particularly stressed. The Commission was, however, deeply concerned that the level of resources that had been mobilized remained inadequate.

88. The Commission endorsed the report of the Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology which was held at Teheran in June 1992. The Meeting had adopted the Tehran Declaration on Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Technology-led Industrialization in Asia and the Pacific, and a Regional Strategy and Action Plan for Industrial and Technological Development. The Regional Strategy and Action Plan provided the basis for forging closer regional cooperation in accelerating the pace of industrial and technological development. The Commission was pleased with the activities initiated by the secretariat towards the implementation of the Regional Strategy, which encouraged the promotion of linkages between industry, investment, trade and technology for manufacturing diversification; complementarity; and improvement of competitiveness through the strengthening of regional economic cooperation. It was noted that Governments had already taken steps to implement the Regional Strategy and Action Plan in the area of institutional capacity-building in the region.

89. The Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference was held at Bali in August 1992. The Conference, sponsored by ESCAP and UNFPA, considered and adopted the Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development. The Declaration would serve as the basis for policy-making and programming. The countries in the ESCAP region had set targets and goals for themselves by adopting strategies to attain replacement-level fertility, equivalent to around 2.2 children per woman, by the year 2010 or sooner, and to reduce the level of infant mortality to 40 per thousand live births or lower during the same period.

The Commission considered a set of proposals relating to the implementation of the Bali Declaration, including activities aimed at improving the awareness and understanding of population and sustainable development issues among planners, policy makers and programme managers at national, subnational and sectoral levels. It was felt that issues relating to population and sustainable development had become increasingly complex and inextricably linked to poverty, resources, environment, the role and status of women, and human resources development. They were also interlinked with the phenomena of urbanization and metropolitan growth, ageing, family planning and maternal and child health, and internal and international migration, which had grave consequences for the region. The principal means by which the secretariat rendered assistance to members and associate members in this field included technical assistance and advisory services; the development and implementation of policy-oriented intercountry research; and information dissemination.

90. In compliance with Commission resolution 48/3 on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, adopted at its forty-eighth session, in Beijing, in April 1992, ESCAP had convened the Meeting to Launch the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, in Beijing in December 1992. The Meeting considered and adopted the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region, as well as the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002. The Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons provides an opportunity for the 56 countries and areas of the ESCAP region to consolidate efforts initiated during the preceding United Nations Decade through a new emphasis on regional cooperation in support of progress at the national level. The Commission recognized that in order to achieve the objectives of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons an agenda for action was needed to translate the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons into action in the Asian and the Pacific region. The Commission recognized that the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, 1983-1992, had contributed significantly to progress achieved in the ESCAP region in matters concerning people with disabilities, especially by raising awareness of such matters within Governments and among the population at large, and by focusing on prevention and rehabilitation activities.

91. The Commission provided guidance to the secretariat on its proposal to establish, subject to the availability of resources, an advisory panel of representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities, and other experts, to monitor and review the implementation of the Agenda for Action and to advise on means of attaining the aims and objectives of the Decade as enshrined in the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities.

92. The Commission also considered and adopted the proposed programme of work and priorities, 1994-1995. It noted that the restructuring and reorganizing of the secretariat was contingent on the completion of the Secretary-General's restructuring of United Nations Headquarters and its field operations. It also noted that one of the objectives of that exercise was to maximize the impact of the United Nations in the field of economic and social development. Therefore, any possible reorganization of the ESCAP secretariat, to be carried out by the Secretary-General as the Chief Administrative Officer under the Charter of the United Nations, would be based on the above-mentioned perspectives and would

take into account the effective servicing of the thematic programme of work already adopted by the Commission.

93. The Commission noted that in accordance with the renewed focus and revised priorities established by the Commission, measures had been taken to reinforce the functional relationship between the secretariat and various United Nations organizations and bodies with a view to undertaking a coordinated approach to problem-solving and rendering assistance to members and associate members of the Commission. In that context, it was noted that the various inter-agency mechanisms presently in existence, namely the Inter-agency Committee on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, the Inter-agency Committee on Integrated Rural Development and the Inter-agency Committee on Water for Asia and the Pacific, had met in recent months. In addition, based on a memorandum of understanding to be signed between ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank, joint activities and initiatives were planned, including the launching of a joint mission to the Asian CIS Republics.

94. The Commission recalled its resolution 48/5 of 23 April 1992 on the social development strategy for the ESCAP region towards the year 2000 and beyond, in which it had, inter alia, requested the Executive Secretary to convene in 1994 a regional conference of senior government officials, concerned United Nations bodies and agencies and other relevant organizations in order to review and assess the progress achieved in attaining the aims and objectives of the strategy. The Commission decided that the Regional Meeting of Senior Officials should be renamed the Regional Ministerial Conference in Preparation for the World Summit on Social Development. It welcomed the offer of the Government of the Philippines to host that ministerial conference in Manila in 1994.

95. The Commission was pleased that the active cooperation and support of various organizations and agencies had been sought for important forthcoming events, such as the Ministerial Conference on Urbanization for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, October 1993), the Regional Ministerial Conference on Women in Development (Indonesia, June 1994) and the Ministerial-level Meeting on Space Applications (China, September 1994). Expansion and strengthening of cooperation between ESCAP and subregional organizations, including the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, the South Pacific Forum and the Economic Cooperation Organization, were considered of utmost importance to regional development and of great mutual benefit.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

96. Activities carried out under the programme of work of the ECLAC system, which includes the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), focused mainly on the achievement of sustained economic growth with equity in order to ensure the social cohesion and political stability which is the foundation for all development.

97. In the field of agriculture, studies were conducted on agriculture and forestry development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

98. As regards economic development, ECLAC monitored economic trends in the countries of the region and analysed economic and social policies and development strategies in Latin America and the Caribbean that would harmonize macroeconomic stability with social equity and structural change. As part of its ongoing activities, ECLAC published the Economic Panorama of Latin America, 1992, the Preliminary Overview of the Economy of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1992 and the Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1991.

99. The Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation had strengthened information management in the region.

100. ILPES carried out new and priority activities assigned to it by member Governments during the ninth session of the Regional Council for Planning, held within the framework of the eighth session of the Conference of Ministers and Heads of Planning of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Madrid, 22 to 26 March 1992.

101. For this purpose, the Institute had to introduce changes in its training, technical cooperation and research components. The Institute changed its training strategy through the introduction of a flexible, modular system of intermediate-length courses focusing on specific issues in response to government requirements.

102. The holding of a seminar on models and instruments for evaluating budgetary policy, together with the preparation of a number of studies on the topic, afforded closer contact with the budget administrations of the countries of the region.

103. With regard to activities in the industrial, scientific and technological fields, special emphasis was placed on the execution of the following two projects: "Design of policies to strengthen the capacity for technological innovation and enhance international competitiveness in the Latin American entrepreneurial environment", and "Machinery and action to strengthen and promote the capital-goods industry".

104. The first project is designed to help elaborate action programmes that will result in specific political measures at the sectoral level to stimulate technological innovation in the entrepreneurial environment. Three documents, including one book, were prepared in connection with the second project, which focused its efforts on consolidating focal points for demand and promoting the technical and productive capacity of the regional capital-goods sector and strengthening the Latin American Association of Capital-Goods Industries.

105. Two issues of the journal Industrialización y desarrollo tecnológico were produced.

106. In the field of international trade, work focused on formulating policies and defining mechanisms to continue expanding and improving the trade position of Latin America and the Caribbean in the changing context of the world economy.

107. To that end, 12 documents, including one book, were prepared: 2 documents examine different elements of prevailing trade policies in both developed and developing countries and suggest guidelines for changing production patterns with social equity in Latin America; 4 others offer guidelines for promoting the region's exports of goods and services and analyse the present situation and outlook of Latin America's economic relations; the other 6 reports study different aspects of Latin American economic integration, based on which they formulate recommendations for strengthening the process.

108. With respect to development finance, studies were conducted and a seminar was organized in Santiago in December 1992 on bank regulation and supervision and pension reform systems. The second volume of Regulation and Supervision of Banks: Case Studies in Latin America and the Caribbean and five issues of the Financiamiento del Desarrollo series were published.

109. In the area of marine resources, efforts focused on analysing the contents of the relevant chapter of Agenda 21, in order to help countries formulate marine policies that could respond to those challenges.

110. With respect to water-related issues, assistance was provided to a number of countries and their training capacity in integrated water-resource management was strengthened. A cooperation network was formed, advisory services on organizational reform were provided and courses were held.

111. In the field of mining, support continued to be provided to the Latin American Mining Organization in implementing phase II of the Latin American Regional Mining Information and Documentation System and the situation of mining in several countries was assessed.

112. In the field of environment and human settlements, priority tasks were first, to make regional preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and second, to comply with United Nations mandates concerning regional implementation of Agenda 21, which assigns to ECLAC the role of regional coordinating agency. A Regional Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean was organized (Santiago, 16-20 March 1992).

113. Technical assistance was provided through the execution of the following projects: "Technical cooperation for environmental planning and management in Latin America and the Caribbean"; "Guidelines and advisory services on controlled environmentally sound waste management"; and "Urban management in selected middle-sized cities of Latin America".

114. The regional population programme, implemented by CELADE, provided technical cooperation activities to countries in the following areas: the elderly population; the use of the REDATAM-PLUS system (retrieval of data for small areas and interfacing with geographical and demographic information systems); census processing; demographic analysis; maternal and child mortality; applications of the "previous child" computer program; population and environment; population projections; spatial distribution; demographic dynamics of poverty; population policies; documentation on population distributed in the CD-ROM (Compact Disk/Read Only Memory) format; and computerized bibliographical searches.

115. CELADE training and teaching activities included a postgraduate course on population and development held in Santiago from March to December 1992); the Intensive Regional Course on Demographic Analysis for Development, held in San José, Costa Rica from August to December 1992, and five workshops on REDATAM-PLUS.

116. CELADE also helped to disseminate demographic knowledge among the Governments of the region by organizing the Meeting of Government Experts on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Saint Lucia, 6 to 9 October 1992.

117. The Social Development Division concentrated its efforts on preparing technical documents for the Third Regional Conference on Poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago from 23 to 25 November 1992. These documents presented new practical experience in raising the productivity of the rural and urban poor and enhancing the effectiveness of social policy; they also outlined the main activities being carried out by the Governments of the region to eradicate poverty in their countries.

118. A number of studies were prepared on social policies and economic adjustment, the family and youth.

119. As regards activities related to the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean, regional preparatory activities began for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995. ECLAC has already begun activities related to the elaboration of the new regional programme of action for women in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, and is preparing a diagnosis of the status of women that substantively incorporates this topic into the new ECLAC proposal on changing production patterns with social equity.

120. As the secretariat for women's affairs of ECLAC, the 14th and 15th meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean were held in Curaçao, 18 to 19 June 1992 and Mexico City, 29 to 30 October 1992, respectively.

121. The Statistics and Projections Division centred its activities on the following:

(a) Enlargement of the regional framework of economic and social statistical information;

(b) Statistical development and quantitative analysis - in this area, preparations continued for the adoption of the new System of National Accounts (Rev.4). Special importance was attached to the refinement of methods of updating sampling frames and sample designs; the development of household survey databases to facilitate the application of more advanced methods of measuring poverty; the study of computerized systems for use in the countries of the region; and the analysis and definition of the indicators incorporated each year into the "Panorama social de América Latina";

(c) Regional cooperation: especially noteworthy was the organization of the Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas, held in Madrid. In addition, ECLAC collaborated with the United Nations Statistical Division in organizing two seminars on the renovation of sampling frames and sample designs;

(d) Economic projections, by analysing prospective medium and long-term studies on Latin American economic and social development;

(e) Global integration of the region, by studying the situation and evolution of the world economy in order to analyse its possible influence on the regional development process.

122. In the field of transport, three documents, including one book, were prepared in connection with the execution of the following three projects: "Technical cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean concerning the transport, distribution, commercialization and competitiveness of their exports"; "The impacts of subsidies and different systems of control and organization on urban public transport systems in Latin America"; and "Technical cooperation between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the field of road maintenance".

123. Another publication inspired technical cooperation missions to study how to rationalize port activities in 14 countries of the region.

124. Support was given to member countries in establishing and institutionalizing the Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Public Works of South America, a forum whose main purpose is to achieve integration and coherence between the positions that were previously presented separately at the Meeting of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Public Works of the Andean Group and at the Meeting of Ministers of Public Works and Transport of the Southern Cone Countries.

125. Activities of the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico included analysing economic developments in the 10 countries of the subregion. With regard to Central American integration, a wide-ranging analysis of strategies to fulfil the many commitments negotiated was completed.

126. Studies were conducted and technical assistance was provided to countries in the following sectors: economic development, social development, international trade, food and agriculture, industrial development and energy.

127. In response to the priority which the Governments of the subregion attach to economic relations between Mexico and Central America, studies were conducted on the topic and cooperation was provided to the countries concerned in their negotiations to strengthen commercial ties.

128. Support for the electrical integration of the countries of the Central American isthmus was a top priority. Documents were prepared on the energy crisis, ways of saving energy and electrical interconnection. Together with the Latin American Energy Organization, alternatives for the supply of oil were designed. Another priority issue was the supply of oil for electricity generation.

129. The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, in Port of Spain, Trinidad, focused its attention on the analysis of issues relevant to the promotion of the socio-economic development of the member countries of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee.

130. Studies were conducted, including statistical publications, and technical cooperation activities were carried out on social and economic problems of the subregion, including issues related to trade, tourism, environment, population and industrial development.

131. Substantive services were provided to the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology.

D. Economic Commission for Africa

132. The following is a summary of activities of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) during the period of 24 April 1992 to 6 May 1993.

133. In the field of industrial development and in the context of the United Nations Second Industrial Development Decade in Africa (IDDA), emphasis was placed on strengthening the technological and entrepreneurial capabilities of African countries at national, subregional and regional levels. During the period under review, particular attention was paid to small-scale, cottage and rural industries, highly advanced technology and subregional and regional cooperation.

134. Three reports were prepared for the 11th meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry scheduled to take place in Mauritius from 24 May to 4 June 1993: (a) a report on the problems, policies, issues and prospects by the year 2000 of Africa's basic industries (chemical, metal and engineering industries); (b) a report on the assessment of policies and strategies for the rehabilitation and revitalization of selected industrial subsectors; and (c) a report on progress made in the implementation of the programme for the Second IDDA. On the basis of the poor performance of the African industrial sector, the first two reports drew the attention of African Ministers of Industry to the need to reformulate their national and subregional policies and strategies for a self-reliant and self-sustained integrated industrial development, and proposed policy options for sustainable industrial growth in Africa for the 1990s and beyond. The third report assessed progress made in the implementation of the programme for the Second IDDA and made proposals for monitoring and follow-up of the programme.

135. In the field of agricultural development policy, planning and programming, a unique output was produced by ECA: a technical publication on the evaluation and monitoring of the impact of the 1992 European economic integration measures on African agriculture. The publication discussed the various factors underlying the European single market, paying particular attention to such areas as export of primary commodities, imports of agricultural inputs and relevant macroeconomic policies governing subsidies, prices, foreign exchange, etc. It offered advisory services to member countries and underscored the need for galvanizing their cooperation in the face of moves to strengthen economic integration in other regions, such as Europe.

136. An equally important output implemented by ECA was a seminar on training needs in agricultural development planning and programming, held in Tangiers in October 1992 for the benefit of North African countries.

137. During the 7th meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment, which took place in Addis Ababa in March 1993, a report on the follow-up to UNCED was presented. This report included preliminary proposals for strategies to implement Agenda 21 within the framework of the African Common Position on Environment and Development. The proposals contained the major African environment and development concerns as expressed in the African Common Position. The Committee made comments which were brought to the attention of the ECA Conference of Ministers at its nineteenth session.

138. In the area of natural resources and more particularly in the water resources sector, the secretariat assisted member States in coordinating and harmonizing their activities in the development of natural resources within the transboundary river/lake basin areas. The main objective of ECA activities in this regard was to promote subregional and regional cooperation among the riparian countries of the transboundary river/lake basins, especially in basin areas in which no formal intergovernmental organizations presently exist for the integrated and joint development of such resources.

139. At the request of the member States of the Undugu Group, comprising the Nile basin countries and the Central African Republic, ECA prepared a draft framework for cooperation in the Undugu countries. The draft document was considered by a meeting of experts.

140. The activities of the secretariat under the Statistical Development programme during the period 24 April 1992 to 6 May 1993 were directed at assisting African countries in establishing and/or developing durable infrastructure for collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating integrated demographic, social, economic and environment statistics. The secretariat also provided continuous technical support for developing national data-processing capabilities, especially by enhancing the utilization of microcomputers and promoting the improvement of the quality, relevance, timeliness and intercountry comparability of statistical data.

141. The objective of those activities was national statistical capability building and self-reliance. Emphasis was placed on training that was delivered during technical advisory missions (i.e., on-the-job training) as well as during workshops.

142. The field projects on the Statistical Development Programme for Africa and the Regional Advisory Service in Demographic Statistics were the major tools employed by the secretariat to respond to the needs of the statistical services of member States.

143. Among the major activities undertaken by the secretariat on population issues was the preparation for and convening of the Third African Population Conference, held in Dakar from 7 to 12 December 1992. The Conference was convened in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/93, in which the Council requested regional commissions to convene conferences to review

experience gained in population policies and programmes in their regions as part of their contribution to the preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in September 1994. Unlike previous meetings, this meeting was conducted at the ministerial level and preceded by a meeting of experts. The Conference theme was "Population, family and sustainable development". The Conference was a success and drafted the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development, which will be presented to the ECA Conference of Ministers for adoption.

144. During the reporting period, the African Training and Research Centre for Women continued to assist ECA member States in improving the socio-economic conditions of African women and enhancing women's participation and contribution to development. In line with priorities for 1992-1993, the secretariat's programme of activities focused on the enhancement of women's skills and the improvement of their position vis-à-vis control of production and distribution services. The secretariat pursued its efforts for the establishment of the regional Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs and the Bank for African Women with a view to strengthening women's entrepreneurial activities and improving their access to resources. Efforts were also made to improve women's activities in the informal sector. The secretariat also undertook a study on the establishment of a Bank for African Women. The study depicted the present situation and the feasibility of setting up a new structure that would enhance women's access to resources.

145. The secretariat and its Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs), through their assistance to intergovernmental organizations and their member countries, undertook a number of activities to promote economic integration and cooperation in Africa.

146. Within the joint Organization of African Unity/ECA/African Development Bank secretariat, consultations took place on the establishment and functioning of and assistance to the African Economic Community (AEC). The ECA secretariat made concrete proposals for the rationalization of the joint secretariat through the coordination and harmonization of the work of the three organizations.

147. Assisted by its MULPOCs, ECA undertook activities with a view to strengthening subregional economic integration and cooperation. Technical assistance was provided to countries of the five subregions and their intergovernmental organizations to promote cooperation through the harmonization, coordination and rationalization of their work programmes and activities.

148. In the area of transport, the Economic Commission for Africa cooperated with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) through participation in the global meeting of the Group of Experts in Multimodal Transport, at which ECA presented a paper on the impact of larger containers on surface transport. ECA also cooperated with the World Bank and participated in a regional seminar on railway restructuring.

149. All the activities undertaken in this field during the reporting period were designed to support and strengthen activities for the implementation of the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade for Africa Programme

and constituted the basis on which future activities for the implementation of the relevant Decade projects would be based.

150. As for maritime transport, the secretariat prepared the following technical publications: Guidelines for the Improvement of Clearing and Forwarding Operations with a View to Facilitating Seaborne Trade in Africa, Guidelines for Development of Subregional/Regional Cooperation in Shipping in Africa and Port Dues and Charges for Cargo Handling and their Impact on Port Efficiency.

151. As far as social development was concerned, activities focused on issues concerning youth, the family and disabled persons. In this connection, the following technical publications were completed: Youth and Health Implications for Africa's Manpower for Development and Transformation; Innovative Strategies for Dealing with Youth Unemployment in Africa; Directory of Youth Organizations in Africa; and Impact of Economic and Social Changes on the African Family.

152. During this period, the secretariat continued its efforts to promote the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992) through the publication and circulation of the newsletter Equal Time, which highlighted a number of activities undertaken by and for disabled persons.

153. The secretariat continued to provide technical and substantive support to the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, including monitoring the implementation of its various activities.

154. The secretariat also prepared a report on major issues and developments and ECA activities in the field of social development, as a contribution to the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Social Development at its twenty-third session, in Vienna, from 8 to 17 February 1993. A progress report on activities in preparation for the International Year of the Family was also prepared for the Inter-agency Meeting on the Year held in Vienna from 10 to 12 March 1993.

155. In the area of development planning, methods, modelling and projections, the secretariat, during the period under review, undertook a set of activities relating to research on topical planning issues of particular interest to Africa; economic modelling and forecasting; operational activities on assistance to countries on development planning; and economic projections and forecasts.

156. In the field of economic modelling and forecasting, ECA developed a short-term forecasting model for the Congo, including programmatization and computerization, with a view to guiding the country in building its own national forecasting systems. The system will be further extended into a generalized framework that will encompass both short-term management and long-term perspectives. For that purpose, ECA is currently involved in developing a set of comprehensive macroeconomic models based on the methodological framework of computable general equilibrium models. Twice every year, ECA presents to World Project Link meetings a paper on the economic situation and outlook of developing Africa, based on the simulation of an open economic model which takes into account both internal and external factors influencing the African economy.

157. As for the least developed island and land-locked countries, ECA undertook a survey of economic and social conditions in the African least developed countries (1991-1992). This study gives a detailed account of the structure of GDP and development of the major economic sectors (agriculture, manufacturing, mining), including an assessment of trade, balance of payments, debt and development finance flows and policies pursued in the African least developed, island and land-locked countries.

158. In the field of trade and development finance, the secretariat undertook a number of activities focusing on trade development and finance issues pursuant to the Programme Budget for 1992-1993. Activities included undertaking advisory missions, preparing documents, carrying out studies and participating in and contributing to meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences.

159. During the period under review, the activities of the Pan-African Development Information System included delivery of training, advisory services and other forms of technical cooperation, database development, network-building, user services, servicing of legislation and other meetings, undertaking of studies and issuance of publications for ECA member States, subregional and regional institutions and non-governmental organizations.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

160. The ESCWA region is gradually recovering from the devastating effects of the Gulf War and its aftermath. Overall regional economic performance improved significantly in 1992. This is reflected in higher aggregate output and per capita income levels; marked improvement in the internal and external balance situation; and reduced inflationary pressures. Reconstruction and implementation of structural adjustment policies were the main themes of development in many countries of Western Asia during the past year. Below are some of the main activities undertaken by ESCWA in its endeavour to promote regional cooperation in Western Asia during the reporting period.

161. Under the development planning programme, several studies and reports were undertaken, addressing different aspects of regional cooperation, with emphasis on the state of the regional economy in the wake of the Gulf War, including the annual survey of economic and social developments in the ESCWA region; analytical reviews of development trends and issues in the external sector and money and finance; a comprehensive study analysing the overall and sectoral impact of the Gulf crisis and war on economic cooperation with other developing countries in the region; and a study on financial resources availability and management in Western Asia.

162. In the energy field, ESCWA actively participated in the UNDP-sponsored seminar on domestic energy policies and management in the Arab countries in October 1992. The seminar adopted recommendations that aimed mainly at improving the efficiency of energy use, promoting the development of conventional as well as renewable energy resources, and strengthening regional cooperation. An interregional symposium on gas development and market prospects by the year 2000 and beyond was jointly sponsored and organized by ESCWA and UNDP. The symposium adopted a set of recommendations for the development of natural gas projects and the expansion of its use and trade within the framework

of regional and interregional cooperation. Moreover, the Energy Subprogramme completed a report on progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action in the ESCWA region. The report included, inter alia, a review and assessment of activities undertaken in the area of subregional and regional cooperation for the implementation of joint renewable energy projects and the expansion of ESCWA regional information networks on new and renewable energy sources.

163. Several activities were initiated for the promotion of regional cooperation in the field of water resources. ESCWA prepared a preliminary document entitled "Water and peace in the Middle East", reflecting ESCWA views on the ongoing Arab-Israeli peace negotiations and their implications for the region in the water sector. ESCWA participated in the 5th meeting of the Arab Committee for the International Hydrological Programme, at which most ESCWA countries were represented. The ESCWA representative presented a paper describing the ESCWA role in the region's water sector and emphasizing the importance of coordination and cooperation in specific areas related to water resources.

164. As a follow-up to the ESCWA regional preparatory conference to UNCED, the Commission, in its resolution 180 (XVI) of 2 September 1992, called for the establishment of an Arab and international inter-agency coordinating committee on environment and development for the purpose of promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development and implementing Agenda 21. The efforts of ESCWA to identify country-specific and regional environmental problems in order to develop appropriate policy strategies, methodologies and safeguards for promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development is reflected in preparatory work to convene several technical workshops in 1993, including one entitled "Regional workshop on awareness and preparedness for emergencies at the local level in the Arab world" and another entitled "Symposium on cleaner technology applications in developing countries".

165. In the domain of food and agriculture, ESCWA continued to disseminate information through the issuance of its annual publication Agriculture and Development in Western Asia. Action was also initiated for the preparation of a national plan of action to combat desertification in the United Arab Emirates and the formulation of two desertification control projects in Yemen and Oman. Various studies on rural development at the national level have been undertaken, in preparation for an ad hoc expert group meeting on rural development at the ESCWA region level. Two country studies, seven papers and one regional study have been prepared. The meeting is to be held in Amman in October 1993. Furthermore, in emphasizing capacity-building in Western Asia, the Joint ESCWA/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Division held several training workshops during the reporting period. These included workshops and seminars on training in the use of computers in agricultural policy analysis; farm-management surveys; data processing and project planning; and agricultural marketing at the regional and international levels.

166. As for the industrial sector, ESCWA organized a regional seminar entitled "Motivation, orientation and training techniques for enhancing industrial entrepreneurship in the ESCWA region", and an expert group meeting entitled "Interconnection technologies for electronics in the Arab countries". Various studies were undertaken in areas pertaining to strengthening the functioning of industrial training institutions in the ESCWA region; promoting entrepreneurship

in small-scale industry; and reviewing and assessing recent developments in the manufacturing sector of the ESCWA region.

167. In the field of science and technology, a workshop on the "Implications of new and advanced materials technologies for the economies of the ESCWA countries" was organized by ESCWA jointly, with the New Technology and the Arab Region Programme of the United Nations Industrial Development Programme. The ESCWA science and technology programme has responded to enhanced interest in environmental affairs and the wide scope for applying science and technology to protecting the environment by making preparations for future activities directly dealing with the application of science and technology in order to promote the protection of the region's environment and to introduce/develop environmentally sound technologies. This is partly manifested in the series of activities under way on ozone-depleting substances and the utilization of space technology for monitoring desert environments.

168. The activities of the transport and communication programme for strengthening regional cooperation and development in the field of transport have focused on three main issues: (a) the impact of privatization and deregulation matters and subsidy policies on the transport sector; (b) manpower policies and training for transport operations; and (c) maritime transport problems. In addition to the annual issue of the ESCWA Transport Bulletin, four publications pertaining to developments in the field of transport in the ESCWA region were completed. These publications focused on the privatization and deregulation of selected transport modes, subsidies in the transport sector, the pricing policies of port services and the training needs of transport authorities in Western Asia. In addition, ESCWA organized a seminar on modern pricing policies for ports in the ESCWA region and an expert group meeting on training requirements in the transport sector.

169. Within its activity on regional cooperation, the statistics programme participated in a number of technical and policy-oriented meetings, including the Second Arab Conference on National Accounts, the Statistical Committee of the Council for Arab Economic Unity, the Statistical Standing Committee of the League of Arab States, the Board of Directors of the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics and the Regional Seminar for Senior Statisticians in Household Surveys. At the international level, ESCWA also participated in the Interregional Seminar on the Revision of the System of National Accounts, the Meeting of the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, and other intersecretariat working groups and meetings held at United Nations Headquarters in New York. As for the dissemination of statistical information, in 1992 the statistics programme published editions of the Statistical Abstract of the ESCWA Region, the Bulletin of National Accounts and the External Trade Bulletin.

170. Under the social development and population programme, ESCWA organized the Cultural Event of Disabled Persons in the ESCWA Region, which included substantive sessions; assessment and evaluation of the World Programme of Action for Disabled Persons at the end of the decade in the ESCWA region; and the formulation of a regional long-term strategy. Four technical publications were issued: on national policies for crime prevention; national policies of drug-abuse control; the situation of marginalized youth groups in the region; and the adaptation and transfer of new technologies for disabled persons in the region.

The Commission also organized and co-sponsored with the Islamic Development Bank a symposium on low-cost housing in the Arab region, which called for the intensification of efforts to exchange information and experiences and coordinate policies and programmes with a view to alleviating the problems of housing in the region. In addition, preparatory work was initiated for undertaking two expert group meetings, on "unemployment in the Arab world" and "Human development".

171. Under the women and development subprogramme, the Commission completed five case-studies on the participation of women in the food and textiles industries of five member States. Also, executive summaries of nine studies on the participation of women in development were issued in Arabic and English for the benefit of other United Nations bodies and funding organizations. ESCWA continued to support technical assistance activities for the development of women in the region and has also undertaken various activities which will be used as major inputs in the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family, to be held in Amman in November 1993.

172. In its endeavour to promote and strengthen regional cooperation, the technical cooperation subprogramme, through regional advisory services, has assisted member States in strengthening national and regional institutions in the following areas: data processing, energy, environment, human resources development, industrial development, national accounts and economic statistics, development planning, science and technology, transport and communications, and water resources development.

173. During the reporting period, ESCWA intensified its cooperation and coordination of activities with other regional and international organizations and Arab institutions active in the region with a view to avoiding duplication of work and ensuring the optimum use of limited resources.

III. MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

174. The section of the present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1823 (XVII) and Economic and Social Council resolution 1817 (LV), by which the Secretary-General was requested to submit to the Council at its summer sessions annual reports on the meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions.

175. Since the regular session of the Economic and Social Council of 1992, the executive secretaries met on 10 and 11 May 1993 in New York. Following consultations within the framework of the interdepartmental Task Force on Decentralization, 10/ which were preceded by working level consultations during the week 3 to 7 May 1993, the executive secretaries met with the Secretary-General on 11 May. Other meetings were chaired by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, current coordinator for the executive secretaries. This section of the present report reflects the main issues discussed at those meetings.

10/ See Report of the Secretary-General, revised estimates as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 47/212 (A/C.5/47/88), para. 61.

A. Decentralization

176. In his statement to the General Assembly of 2 November 1992, the Secretary-General stressed the importance of decentralization at both national and regional levels as a means of bringing the United Nations closer to the Member States it serves. He also indicated his intention to strengthen the role and contribution of the regional commissions, emphasizing at the same time the need for the commissions to operate within a coherent organizational strategy and for decentralization and greater delegation of authority to be accompanied by measures to enhance accountability.

177. The revised estimates went on to state:

> "The regional commissions carry out important information-gathering and socio-economic analysis functions in their respective regions. They have been playing a major role in developing policy on economic integration and in clarifying economic, social, political and environmental issues relating to sustainable development. They thus provide a forum and a network for cooperation among their Member States and between them and other States at the technical level. In addition, they are increasingly becoming providers of technical cooperation activities, especially in intersectoral areas and in areas where no other United Nations entity has a comparative advantage.
>
> "Greater recognition of the important contributions that the regional commissions can make, through measures aimed at strengthening their functions and increasing their responsibilities, is an important and integral part of the current restructuring exercise. These measures should include arrangements aimed at enhancing their contributions, as the regional arms of a single, integrated United Nations programme in the social and economic field, to the global work of Headquarters departments, as well as specific measures of decentralization." 11/

178. In paragraph 8 of its resolution 47/212 B the General Assembly, noted the indication by the Secretary-General that the further restructuring of the Secretariat in the economic and social sectors would entail the decentralization of activities to the field and to the regional commissions and stressed that his proposal relating to decentralization of activities to the field should be in accordance with Assembly resolution 47/199 and those relating to the regional commissions, in accordance with the criteria agreed by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council within their respective mandates and on the basis of clearly identified relative advantage.

179. The importance of decentralization at the regional level stems from the role and functions assigned to the regional commissions in several resolutions of both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Among the broad responsibilities assigned to the regional commissions in those resolutions are the following:

(a) To function as the main centres within the United Nations system for general economic and social development within their respective regions;

11/ Ibid., paras. 59 and 60.

(b) To exercise team leadership and responsibility for coordination and cooperation at the regional level;

(c) To provide inputs for global policy-making processes of competent United Nations organs and participate fully in the implementation of relevant policy and programme decisions taken by those organs;

(d) To participate actively in operational activities, particularly in subregional, regional and interregional projects of an intersectoral nature;

(e) To assist in strengthening regional cooperation and help promote effective interregional cooperation.

180. In defining these responsibilities, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council were mindful of the comparative advantages that the regional commissions enjoy in such areas as information-gathering, monitoring economic developments and promoting cooperation with and among their member Governments, including the provision of technical cooperation and training facilities. These comparative advantages arise, inter alia, from their proximity to member Governments; their consequent ability to appreciate changing or emerging requirements; their accumulated expertise and experience concerning the countries of the region, which are not available elsewhere in the Organization; and above all, their ability to offer, by virtue of the involvement in their work of all countries of their respective regions, a comprehensive framework for regional cooperation.

181. Promoting an effective process of decentralization as a means of strengthening the role and functions of the regional commissions has been a consistent objective of the Organization since the early 1950s. Deriving new impetus from General Assembly resolution 32/197, it found repeated legislative expression in a number of subsequent General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions, including most recently General Assembly resolution 46/235. Progress in response to this legislation has been uneven, although measures have been taken over the years with a view to improving the distribution of responsibilities in identified programme areas, enhancing coordination and, as appropriate, promoting joint activities, through joint units and other forms of collaborative activity.

182. Decentralization is best regarded as a functional process involving a more effective distribution of responsibilities and tasks between global and regional entities that takes full account of the distinct mandates and special characteristics of the regional commissions within the overall structure of the United Nations. It should not entail a fragmentation of the activities of the Secretariat; rather it should promote complementarity and mutual reinforcement of activities and should contribute to the cohesiveness of the work of the United Nations, the various parts of which constitute an integral whole. It follows from this proposition that the commissions should be viewed as the regional arms of a single integrated United Nations programme in the socio-economic field, rather than disparate, separate entities; and that their participation in and contribution to the global work of Headquarters entities should be enhanced and the mechanisms for programmatic interaction strengthened.

183. Relationships among the various components of the United Nations should reflect and support this policy approach to decentralization. They should facilitate the effective discharge by each component of its own responsibilities, while at the same time promoting the concerted development and implementation of overall strategies and programme priorities applicable to the Organization as a whole.

184. The regional commissions differ in, inter alia, their coverage of and the priorities they attach to activities in various substantive fields. Decentralization should therefore be pursued in a pragmatic manner, taking into account the expressed requirements and capabilities of each commission.

185. In the light of the above and as part of the restructuring measures set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 47/212 (A/C.5/47/88), the Secretary-General decided that a task force should be constituted at the Secretariat level, with the participation of the regional commissions, to review substantive Headquarters activities that could be more effectively carried out at the regional level, either because similar activities were already part of the programme of work of the regional commissions or because there was an insufficient critical mass at Headquarters to ensure their cost effectiveness. The task force was mandated to consider Headquarters activities in the fields of, inter alia, natural resources, energy and water, for possible transfer to the regional level, bearing in mind the desirability of retaining certain overall planning and management activities in these areas in the Department for Development Support and Management Services at Headquarters, and also taking into account the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in relation to natural resources activities concerning the environment in general and water in particular; the relevant responsibilities of UNCTAD in respect of commodities, trade and investment; and energy activities related to sustainable development coming within the purview of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

186. Drawing on relevant legislation and discussions thereon at past meetings of the executive secretaries, a number of principles for the distribution of substantive responsibilities and tasks between global components of the United Nations and the regional commissions were drawn up to guide Task Force work. These principles may be summarized as follows:

(a) Effectiveness and efficiency. Responsibility for a given programme should as far as possible be assigned to the entity that, because of the characteristics of its mandate and activities, is most capable of responding in a cost-effective way to the specific needs that the programme is intended to meet, taking into account the nature and location of the intended beneficiaries;

(b) Density of information. Responsibility for a given programme should as far as possible be assigned to the entity (regional, sectoral or global) within the Organization in which there is the greatest concentration of information relevant to that programme;

(c) Multisectoral requirements of activities. Based on a careful analysis of the many disciplines and sectors impinging on the increasingly complex and diverse development problems addressed by United Nations programmes,

responsibility for a given programme should whenever possible be assigned to the organizational entity that, because of the nature of its overall work programme, is best equipped to bring to bear on that programme the multisectoral dimensions required.

187. It was recognized that the above-mentioned principles would need to be applied with flexibility. In particular it was recognized that the identification of activities suitable for decentralization did not necessarily imply that there would no longer be any corresponding role for global entities. It meant that the overwhelming proportion of the work involved would be undertaken at the regional level, while global entities would retain responsibility for global synthesis and analysis and for presenting outputs to central legislative bodies.

188. Based on the above-mentioned principles, the following types of activities for decentralization or progressive decentralization were identified:

(a) Activities that require empirical research and analysis of data and information largely within the regional/subregional context. The following are areas of work in which regional commissions could increasingly participate, given the diversity of situations and requirements: development analysis and policies; the reduction of poverty and changes in the distribution of income; the problems and prospects of individual developing countries; mobilization of personal savings in developing countries; specific problems relating to least developed countries; comparative studies of national experience in population policy; and the impact of social and economic changes on demographic trends and the role of the family in the development process;

(b) Follow-up activities at the regional, subregional and national levels resulting from or associated with global conferences, anniversaries and international years. Global entities have a major role to play in promoting international cooperation for development and in catalysing public awareness of specific issues, including the problems of disadvantaged groups and societies, and should continue to undertake overall monitoring at the global level of action taken in pursuance of the global events just mentioned. But much of the follow-up work, particularly the task of helping to translate the recommendations of international programmes of action into national policies and plans, can be more effectively carried out by the regional commissions because of their multidisciplinary mandates;

(c) Activities to promote planning and management of human resources development, taking into account the differences between and similarities within regions;

(d) Activities to prepare inventories of capabilities and capacities at the regional, subregional and national levels, such as inventories of technological institutions and agencies (for example, in the science and technology programme);

(e) Activities to promote economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. There is undoubtedly a major role for global entities, including UNCTAD and UNDP, in analysing regional and subregional experiences at the global level and in encouraging interregional cooperation. Nevertheless, a

significant portion of the work required to intensify cooperation among developing countries could be more effectively undertaken at the regional level.

189. In preparation for the work of the Task Force, programme reviews were undertaken, including (a) the identification by the executive secretaries of priority subprogrammes in which, in their judgement, their respective commissions enjoyed specific comparative advantages and in which, in the light of the principles and typology outlined above, they saw possibilities for greater cost effectiveness in a decentralization of activities; and (b) the identification by global entities of priority subprogrammes in which, in their judgement, decentralization was possible without undermining the required critical mass of expertise. It was agreed that advisory services, which were included in section 12 of the programme budget, lent themselves especially well to early measures of decentralization.

190. Conclusions reached in the light of the above involved:

(a) A proposed new ratio for the distribution of advisory services, financed from the regular budget under section 12, as between global entities and the regional commissions, which would make the commissions the main providers of such services;

(b) A high degree of decentralization to the regional commissions of responsibilities and resources in the fields of natural resources and energy;

(c) Adjustments in the distribution of responsibilities between global and regional entities in a variety of other programme areas, with possible commensurate reallocations of resources;

(d) Recognition of the substantive functions entrusted to the Regional Commissions New York Office.

191. These conclusions will be reflected in the Secretary-General's proposals for the 1994-1995 programme budget, to be reviewed by the relevant intergovernmental bodies in the coming months.

192. It was recognized that, like restructuring, decentralization should be viewed as a continuing process and the above-mentioned conclusions merely constituted a set of initial measures that would need to be refined, complemented and expanded in the period ahead. Consultations were thus initiated in a number of other areas. In particular:

(a) Discussions were initiated aimed at rendering the contribution of the regional commissions to major humanitarian assistance programmes more continuous and systematic;

(b) A review was initiated of existing economic and social information systems and agreement was reached to establish a task force, comprising the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the heads of the statistical divisions of the regional commissions, in order to enhance interaction among such systems;

(c) Consultations were undertaken and will be pursued on the establishment/strengthening of joint units located at the headquarters of the regional commissions and/or the development of joint programmes, with attendant and more systematic staff exchanges; these were viewed as an integral part of the effort to achieve a single integrated United Nations programme in the economic and social field, with the regional commissions serving as the regional arms of the United Nations in that field;

(d) Issues requiring priority attention in the future so as to pursue the process of strengthening the regional commissions were identified; these included various issues relating to operational activities and the relationships between the regional commissions and UNDP and UNFPA, as well as issues relating to enhancing the delegation of authority to the regional commissions in the administrative field.

193. It was noted that the Secretary-General was in the process of taking steps to promote and support a more effective exercise by the executive secretaries of their coordination role among United Nations organizations and entities at the regional level, including the periodic convening of regional inter-agency meetings.

B. Issues arising from the recent commission sessions

194. The executive secretaries highlighted the important issues which had emerged from the three commission sessions held recently (sections I and II of the present report cover the resolutions adopted and other decisions taken by the commissions at those sessions).

195. The executive secretaries discussed developments emanating from the sessions. Each commented on the increased involvement of their member States in the work of their commission, as evident from the increased attendance and the level of representation at the sessions.

196. The ESCAP theme for its 1993 session had been "Expansion of investment and intraregional trade as a vehicle for enhancing regional economic cooperation and development in Asia and the Pacific". This was the first session to be held since the Commission had adopted the thematic programme and a corresponding subsidiary conference structure around three themes, two technical committees and two special bodies. Due to this reorganization, it had been possible to rationalize the agenda and focus on selected issues of current interest. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP pointed out that the region had gained the potential of becoming an important centre of growth. The share of intraregional exports had risen to more than 45 per cent, and had grown faster than the rate of exports to countries outside the region. The size of markets within the region was expanding rapidly. The Executive Secretary explained that humanitarian matters and social concerns had also received increased attention from the Commission. The Commission was to hold a ministerial level meeting on social development, which would be, in effect, a regional preparatory meeting for the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. Information was provided on other ministerial meetings held since the forty-eighth session of the Commission: on industry and technology (Teheran), transport and communications (Bangkok) and population (Bali). ESCAP would also hold a ministerial conference

on urbanization (Bangkok, November 1993), the Second Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Women in Development (June 1994) and a ministerial-level meeting on space applications for development (Beijing, September 1994). The Commission's adoption of the Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment was expected to provide fresh impetus to strengthening regional economic cooperation. Among the several resolutions unanimously adopted by the Commission, the Executive Secretary pointed out two initiatives carried out by member States: the adoption of a resolution on strengthening the role of ESCAP in the coordination of regional operational activities, which, inter alia, urged that in the coordination of operational activities among United Nations organizations, programmes and funds, as well as among specialized agencies, the role of ESCAP should be strengthened at the regional level; and the adoption of another resolution on eradication of preventable diseases in the Asian and Pacific region as a component of social and economic development, which, inter alia, called on members and associate members, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to give high priority to preventive health care in their economic and social development plans, in the context of the Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond. For the following year's fiftieth session of the Commission, which would be hosted by India, the theme would be "Infrastructure development as key to economic growth and economic cooperation".

197. The Executive Secretary of ECE explained that the recent Commission session had resulted in a reaffirmation of ECE as a regional forum, which was significant given the multitude of other regional organizations in its region. A major issue facing the Commission was its rapidly growing membership. This growth was bringing about a reorientation of ECE activities in order to respond to the new and changing needs of its membership, of which nearly half were countries in transition and less developed countries that increasingly called on the Commission to provide them with technical assistance. The Commission session itself had also undergone reform and was following the new Economic and Social Council format by dividing its annual session into two segments, one on policy and the other on programme coordination. Another area of importance for a growing number of member States was the coordination of social issues. Since global issues increasingly incorporated the social dimension, ECE, which had for political reasons concentrated on economic issues, was now starting to develop a capacity for social questions.

198. For its recent session ECA had as its theme "Taking Africa into the twenty-first century; implementation of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, and Agenda 21". The Commission had recognized that the theme responded to two major imperatives for the region, namely regional integration and environmentally sustainable development. It had underlined the importance of a strong commitment to the implementation of the Abuja Treaty. It had reviewed and adopted African strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21 and had urged all member States to incorporate the strategies proposed in the formulation of their own national policies and programmes on environmental development.

199. ECA had observed that the momentous changes which had been set in motion by the end of the cold war would define the environment for the socio-economic recovery and development of Africa in the 1990s. Therefore, if African countries were to resume sustained growth and achieve accelerated socio-economic

development in the 1990s, they would have to adapt to these changes. It was in this context that the Commission had identified a number of strategic objectives for Africa's economic development in the 1990s. The attainment of those objectives depended critically on, among other things, the financial resources available for their implementation. The Commission had accordingly reviewed strategies for mobilizing financial resources for Africa's development in the 1990s. It was in this context that it had also welcomed the International Conference on Africa's development, to be held in Tokyo from 4 to 6 October 1993. It had called on the international community to use the Tokyo Conference to adopt a concrete package of proposals for fostering the socio-economic development and transformation of Africa through steps to reduce its heavy debt burden; improve its export revenues by opening markets to African products; help Africa to diversify its production base and improve its terms of trade; and offer special support for African least developed countries.

200. The Commission had also examined a wide range of other policy issues vital to the socio-economic development and transformation of Africa, including, among other things, the implications of the ongoing Uruguay Round of Negotiations on African trade; the mid-term review of the Lomé IV Convention, a human development agenda for Africa in the 1990s; a strategic agenda for development management in Africa in the 1990s; and infrastructure development through the effective implementation of the programmes for the United Nations Second Transport and Communications Decade and the Industrial Development Decade.

201. ECA had adopted a new structure which streamlined the intergovernmental machinery considerably. The Executive Secretary informed the meeting that internal organizational restructuring of ECA was also under way. It was aimed mainly at rationalizing divisions, sections and units to enhance synergy among related programmes and reinforce the multidisciplinary approach to problem solving that was one of the sources of the Commission's comparative advantage.

C. Agenda for development

202. The attention of the executive secretaries was drawn to General Assembly resolution 47/181, entitled "An agenda for development", which called on the Secretary-General to prepare a report,

> "taking fully into consideration the objectives and agreements on development adopted by it, containing an analysis and recommendations on ways of enhancing the role of the United Nations and the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in the promotion of international cooperation for development, within the framework and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions' articles of agreement, including, inter alia, a comprehensive annotated list of substantive themes and areas to be addressed by the United Nations in the agenda, as well as his views on priorities among them".

203. Agreeing that development was the unfinished task of the current century, the executive secretaries welcomed the initiative and hoped that it would provide a broad analytical framework and conceptualization of how to broach development in the future. The regional commissions stood ready to contribute

to this important initiative. They considered that targets and goals already agreed on at both global and regional levels should be highlighted in the report. The concept of sustainable development would also have to be taken fully into account, as well as other areas of emerging consensus, such as the linkage of human rights and development and the nexus of democracy and development. Inputs to be provided should also take into account the reality of conflicts and their impact on development. They felt that existing regional experiences would serve well as the building blocks to the global stage. It was agreed to continue a process of consultations on the matter, drawing on experience gained in the preparation of the last International Development Strategy. The regional commissions' inputs would analyse relevant development initiatives in their respective regions throughout the operation of the commissions and would include information on their relationships with the Bretton Woods institutions, regional development organizations and banks, and non-governmental organizations, where applicable.

D. Preparations for and follow-up to global programmes, especially the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

204. Discussion under this agenda item highlighted the profound impact that UNCED had had on the work of various parts of the United Nations, including the regional commissions. While many details of the required follow-up remained to be worked out, the commissions reported that the premise of sustainable development had become and integral part of many of the multidisciplinary activities carried out by them. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP referred in this context to a meeting of experts in their individual capacity soon to be hosted by ESCAP, with funding support from the Asian Development Bank, that would aim at examining ways and means of financing sustainable environment. He further indicated that ESCAP would be preparing a report that would be one of the key background documents for the ministerial meeting on environment and sustainable development to be held in 1995, five years subsequent to the adoption of a regional strategy for environmentally sound and sustainable development.

205. The regional commissions also had an exchange of views on preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen in March 1995. They recalled that General Assembly resolution 47/92 had provided a specific role for the regional commissions in the preparatory process (para. 14). While no regional preparatory conferences were envisioned as such, the executive secretaries felt that the Summit would benefit from a strong regional input, especially since there were wide social discrepancies among the regions. ECE, as the only Commission without a social programme, reported that the request for inputs to the Summit had provided some impetus towards reviewing how to incorporate social aspects in the work of the Commission in response to the newly emerging needs of its increased and changed membership. ESCAP informed the meeting that the Commission, at its recent forty-ninth session, had decided to upgrade a previously scheduled senior officials' meeting to the level of a ministerial conference on social development, with a view to preparing for the World Summit for Social Development. The Ministerial Conference would be hosted

by the Philippines and would build on the work accomplished at the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development, organized by ESCAP and also hosted by the Philippines in Manila in 1991.

206. Regional contributions to the preparations for the Fourth Conference on Women, building on existing programmes in each commission, were also reviewed. ECA indicated that a preparatory commission for the Conference, which would elaborate an African position, would be convened in January 1994. ESCAP indicated that it was preparing to hold the Second Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Women in Development in September 1993 and that Indonesia would host the Conference.

207. As for preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to be held in Turkey in June 1996, the executive secretaries were informed of the outcome of the session of the Commission on Human Settlements just concluded in Nairobi. All the regional commissions had participated in the recently held Preparatory Commission on Habitat II and were poised to participate actively in the Conference. ESCAP reported that a ministerial meeting on urbanization was planned for November 1993, which would serve to prepare inputs for Habitat II.

208. The Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development reviewed with the executive secretaries different aspects of the regional commissions' contributions to the follow-up to UNCED, including their participation in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. As for preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, he referred to the contributions expected of the regional commissions for the report to be submitted to the high-level segment of the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council. He pointed to the close relationship that existed between preparations for the Summit and preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, and he reviewed some joint processes and activities being envisaged. The Under-Secretary-General also referred to preparatory activities under way for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. He pointed out that the bulk of the work was to take place at the regional level. There was agreement that the Economic and Social Council session would provide further opportunities to hold consultations between the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and the regional commissions regarding the follow-up to global initiatives.

209. As for the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in September 1994, the executive secretaries expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the regional preparatory conferences, the last of which had just been concluded at the beginning of May in Mexico under the auspices of ECLAC.

E. Interregional cooperation in energy, trade facilitation and transport

210. Time constraints permitted only a brief discussion of the subject. It was decided that it should feature prominently on the agendas of future meetings of executive secretaries.

211. The regional commissions reiterated their strong commitment to the concept of interregional cooperation, which, at a time of restructuring and revitalization of the economic and social sectors, could serve as an important means of increasing the effectiveness and impact of the system as a whole. It was felt that the potential for cooperation between and among the regional commissions was far from having been fully utilized. It was also pointed out that, while interregional efforts should be based primarily on cooperation among the regional commissions, global bodies could also play a role.

212. A number of successful initiatives were mentioned. The Economic Commission for Europe, for example, had launched the initiative Global Energy Efficiency 21, which was of particular interest to the countries of the former USSR and Eastern Europe. As a result of UNCED an environmental component had been added to the programme, which now seemed a prime candidate for the development of an interregional project. UNDP had been approached for assistance concerning the Global Environment Facility. In the area of trade facilitation the implementation of an interregional project already endorsed by the Economic and Social Council was in its final stages. It was agreed that UNCTAD and ECE would cooperate in finalizing the project document. Regarding transport, an area that lent itself especially well to interregional cooperation, ECE recounted the development of the TIR standards on the international transport of goods, which were now in use in many countries of the world, while ESCAP and ESCWA referred to their close cooperation in the implementation of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific.

F. Other

213. In discussions with UNDP and UNFPA, the regional commissions expressed deep concern about the sharp decline of funds available to the regional commissions under UNDP's fifth programming cycle. In the case of the Economic Commission for Africa, due to the combined effect of reduced allocations for the regional IPF and as a result of resources having been borrowed during the fourth programming cycle against the fifth programming cycle, resources available for the fifth cycle were critically low. The commissions also expressed deep concern about a reduction of funding support for their activities by UNFPA, leaving the population programmes of the regional commissions increasingly dependent on the regular budget.

214. The regional commissions considered that if those trends continued they would have a profoundly negative impact on the commissions' role as executing agencies. They felt that ways of preserving that role, as the strengthened regional arms of a single, integrated United Nations programme in the economic and social field, required attention at the highest levels.

215. The meeting was also briefed by the Special Adviser to the Administrator of UNDP on the evolution of the Human Development Report, including the status of the report for 1993. Arrangements for introducing regional dimensions were discussed and will be further considered in consultation with UNDP.

Date and venue of the next meeting of executive secretaries

216. The executive secretaries welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to further strengthen the practice of convening meetings of executive secretaries.

217. The executive secretaries agreed that the first of those meetings should normally be held in conjunction with the annual substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and should concentrate on those issues of concern to the regional commissions that were most likely to be of concern to other global entities, as well as issues of cooperation and coordination of a system-wide nature. That meeting would normally be chaired by the Secretary-General. Participation of the heads of other entities would be facilitated by their attendance at the Economic and Social Council. Meetings held at the headquarters of the regional commissions would concentrate on issues of particular interest to the regional commissions.

218. The next meeting of executive secretaries will be held during the forthcoming regular session of the Economic and Social Council. The Executive Secretaries accepted the invitation of the Executive Secretary of ECA to hold the following meeting in Addis Ababa in mid-January 1994.

IV. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS TO PROMOTE SUBREGIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

219. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1992/43 on strengthening the role of the regional commissions, requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Council at its substantive session of 1993 a report on the progress made in the implementation of that resolution. A detailed account of action already taken and further steps to be implemented is provided in section III A above. Since this subject constituted the main item on the agenda of the meeting of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions, the information requested has been provided within that context.

V. SUBJECT RELATING TO INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION, OF COMMON INTEREST TO ALL REGIONS

220. In compliance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/174, the executive secretaries of the regional commissions jointly recommended to the Council as the subject for in-depth consideration "Contributions of the regional commissions to the implementation of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development". In response to that recommendation the Economic and Social Council, in its decision 1993/213 entitled "Interregional cooperation", requested the regional commissions to examine at their forthcoming sessions the relevant provisions of chapter 38 of Agenda 21 and submit reports

to the Council containing their conclusions related to such a review and their plans to implement Agenda 21. Those reports should also be made available to the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1993 or, at the latest, in 1994. In view of the meeting schedule of the regional commissions it will only be possible to comply with the resolution in 1994. In the meantime, no report on a subject relating to interregional cooperation, of common interest to all regions, is before the Council for detailed consideration at the present session.